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ABSTRACT

This guide was developed as part of a project to encourage more, and more accurate, teaching about Latin America in U.S. community colleges. The specific purpose of the guide is to survey the range of 20th century Latin American literature in order to suggest various ways in which works from Latin American countries may be integrated into any course concerned specifically with the culture of the region or devoted simply to a study of culture or literature as such. The guide includes an annotated list of works, listed by country, that are especially representative of the high quality of Latin American literature. The guide also seeks to offer a variety of possible approaches to each of the literary genres (essay, short story, poem, novel, and play) and to detail in effect how specific works may be introduced into discussions of history, literature, sociology, psychology, philosophy, and art, as well as composition and any humanities course open to consideration of such cross-currents as politics and poetry, fiction and historiography, science and magic realism, New World and Old. (DB)

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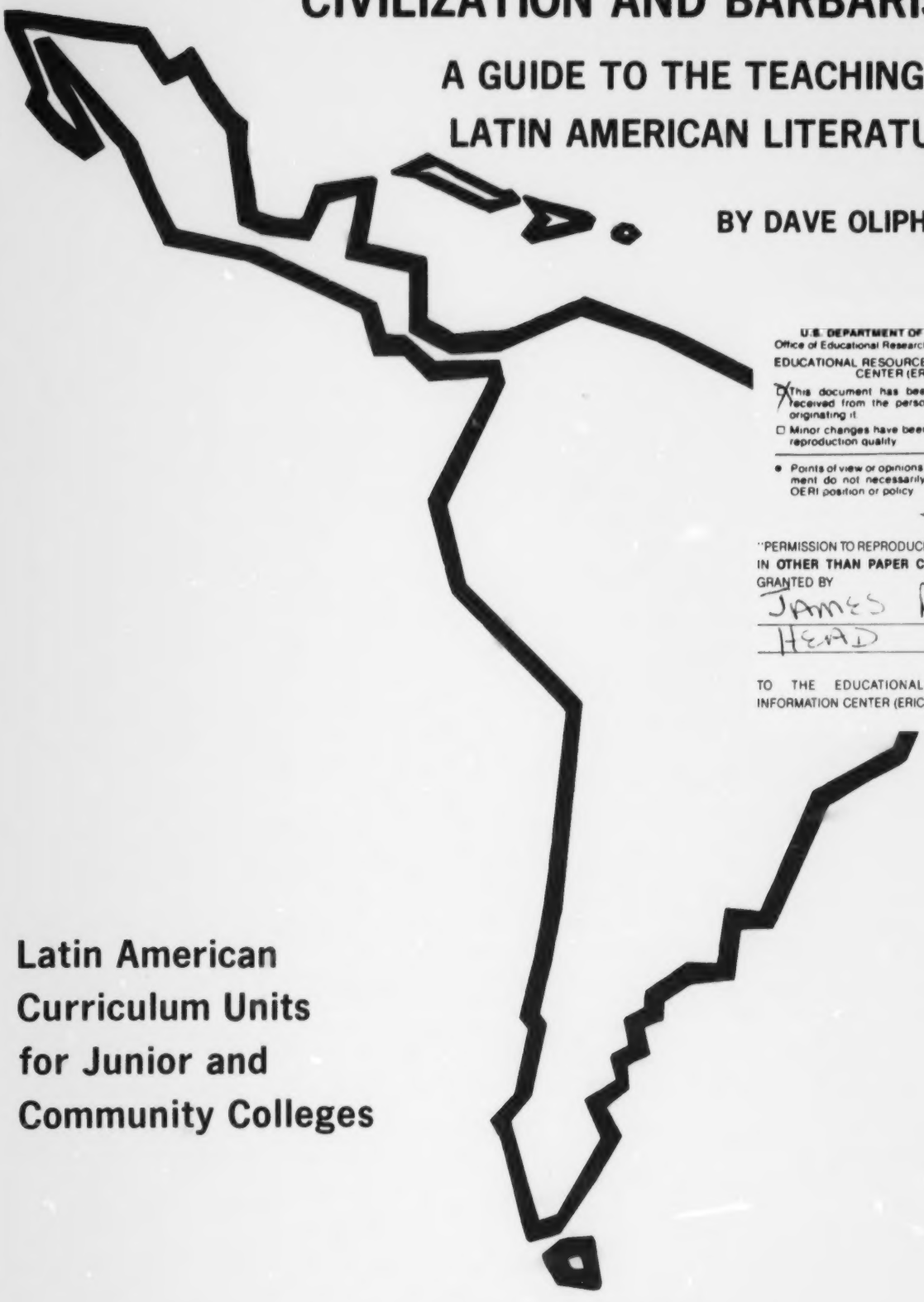
CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM

A GUIDE TO THE TEACHING OF LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY DAVE OLIPHANT



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Latin American Curriculum Units for Junior and Community Colleges

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CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM

A Guide to the Teaching of Latin American Literature

by Dave Oliphant

LATIN AMERICAN CURRICULUM UNITS FOR

JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

INSTITUTE OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM

A Guide to the Teaching of Latin American Literature

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Introduction

The value of studying literature other than one's own lies principally in the light such study sheds on man's universal need to deal with the contradictions, injustices, and daily frustrations that impede his road to a meaningful existence within himself, within his environment, and within the society of men. One way in which man has long dealt with his physical and spiritual, his real and imagined, worlds is by expressing his hopes and fears in words so charged with expressive power that the problems themselves become not only bearable but the very stuff of a moving and enduring art. Despite the differences in outlook from one culture to another--owing largely to economic, social, religious, and historical conditions that produce special emphases and conventional literary approaches (and in turn reactions to these same practices of a given tradition)--the issue of man's struggle within his world of dream and reality remains essentially the same, as do his rhetorical means of analysis and characterization, his tools for considering or creating what he may take at any one time to be the most fulfilling life possible within this conflicting scheme of dream/reality so inherent in every man's fundamental make-up.

The fact that different literatures share both similar visions and common methods for confronting and shaping the paradoxes of existence might suggest that to read one literature is sufficient both for understanding the general character of a literary work and for comprehending its universal import. This view overlooks, however, two important benefits that only the study of a foreign literature can gain for us: first, as in the case of any work of art, the literature of another culture presents, by combining the elements of language and locale for an individual end and in its own style, a unique personality with its own correspondingly inimitable perspective; and second, such a literature provides for a greater appreciation of the unity of mankind in its effort to seek humane explanations and to create the most imaginative and instructive expressions of man's troubled but joyous being. Furthermore, by studying another literature one not only continues the exercise of imagination and reason necessary to the reading of any work of art but also extends such mental and emotional responses into realms where one is challenged to compare

and contrast what Octavio Paz refers to as "the other" with one's own native literature, to consider the influences of one literature on another, and to expand one's appreciation for creations that in the end are the result of both a specific cultural tradition and the individual artist's very personal blending of the essential literary elements.

Although it may be argued that, regardless of the quality or level of performance, any literature is valuable for what it tells us of another culture's contribution toward a more sensible and sensitive response to the world, it remains a matter of utmost importance for both the student and the professional to become familiar first and foremost with those works of art that offer the highest degree of artistry and the greatest sophistication of thought. In order to gain an awareness of such literatures one must either know the language in which the original work was written or have at one's disposal translations and critical evaluations that provide an introduction to the themes and techniques peculiar to that other artistic galaxy. Although translation and criticism are not always so readily forthcoming as we would like, fortunately in the case of Latin American literature the English-speaking student now has available for his use both an excellent array of translations and a significant body of criticism in Spanish as well as in English. Indeed, since the mid-60s the growing popularity of Latin American literature, the profundity of its thought, and the originality of its forms have made such an impact on readers that internationally Latin America has been recognized as perhaps the most important region in the world with regard to the growth and development of contemporary letters. Although the entire history of Latin American literature deserves greater recognition, beginning with Ercilla's La araucana (1569) and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's "First Dream" (1690), it is the twentieth century's outpouring of essays, poems, short stories, novels, and plays that has captured the imagination of the reading world and occupied for Latin America a position as true "vanguardista" of contemporary literature. For this latter reason alone it is essential that students of literature, even at an introductory level, gain some insight into the methods and meanings of Latin American literary art. Further, with the proximity of North and South America and the inevitable economic and political ties between the two continents, it is equally valuable for the English-speaking student to understand by means of such literature how the Latin American sees himself, how he views his neighbor to the north, what his positions are on contemporary issues, and how he faces and attempts to live with ultimately the same internal and external threats to a meaningful existence that all men suffer from and are stimulated by.

The purpose of the present study, then, is to survey the range of twentieth-century Latin American literature in order to suggest the various ways in which works from Latin American countries may be integrated into any course concerned specifically with the culture of the region or devoted simply to a study of culture

or literature as such. In addition to supplying an annotated list of works that are especially representative of the high quality of Latin American literature and may yield any number of cultural insights, the present study seeks to offer a variety of possible approaches to each of the literary genres (essay, short story, poem, novel, and play) and to detail in effect how specific works may be introduced into discussions of history, literature (general and comparative studies), sociology, psychology, philosophy, and art, as well as composition (freshmen, creative, or expository) and any humanities course open to consideration of such cross-currents as politics and poetry, fiction and historiography, science and magic realism, New World and Old. The major emphasis will be placed on works in translation, but suggestions will also be made in terms of original texts that may be especially appropriate for Spanish language studies at the beginning, advanced, and comparative levels. Although some of the larger countries or those with longer and more far-reaching traditions will naturally supply a greater proportion of the examples, every Latin American country offers an author who has achieved an international reputation or has at least published work worthy of note and suitable to one or more of the various approaches.

Essay

Surely the most fundamental of forms and the one employed universally to discuss in a clear, logical, and unified manner any nonmathematical subject, the essay has served both the creative and the critical spirit to express or analyze emotions and ideas that require an introduction (to whom, what, why, or how), an exposition (in which examples are used to clarify and demonstrate the development of points), and conclusions (drawn from the discussion and reached by means of a step-by-step analysis, a logical linking of words, sentences, and paragraphs). Like their precursors, from Plato, Cicero, Montaigne, and Bacon to Berkeley, Dr. Johnson, Hazlitt, and Lamb, Latin American authors have chosen the essay form for working out clearly and consistently their thoughts and passions, adapting and transforming for this purpose a genre basic to every freshman English course. Employed throughout Latin America by the leading exponents and critics of ideas and literary trends, the essay early provided two seminal spokesmen with an outlet for their views on the meaning of Latin American life and the problems confronting their peoples in creating and/or maintaining an appropriate philosophy for their place and culture.

José Martí of Cuba and José Enrique Rodó of Uruguay were two of the first essayists to concern themselves with the question of Latin America's proper course of action, its own peculiar route to self-realization. Both authors speak of Latin America's need to discover the nature of latinate life and to develop a government, literature, and philosophy in keeping with that heritage. Rodó emphasizes the necessity for a native thought that will derive from the character of the Latin American mind. Martí, likewise, suggests that those in Latin American government are too inclined to learn how the German or Frenchman governs, rather than coming to know

> of what elements his own country is made, how one directs these elements in order to arrive, through native practices and institutions, to that desirable state in which each man meets and works and all enjoy the abundance that nature provided for those in the populace who fertilize it by their labor and defend it with their lives. Government must be born of the nation. The spirit of the government must be of the nation. The form of

> government must correspond to the very make-up of the nation. Government is no more than a balancing of the nation's natural qualities.[1]

In both cases as well, the authors essentially reject what Rodó calls a mania for imitating North America. Although Rodó could respect Emerson as a thinker who called for a model America and Martí looked upon Whitman as an exemplary American poet, both Latins were dedicated to the idea of a thought and literature native to the south. Rodó makes the point in this regard that too often "the vision of an America delatinized by free will, without the violence of conquest, and reborn later in the image and likeness of the northern archetype, floats through the dreams of many sincerely interested in our future."[2] In their essays, then, these early writers place their fingers on the pulse of what has become an emotional theme in all Latin American literature--creation and/or maintenance of a true Latin America--and although the form of their essays is not itself highly original, the content calls for the kind of originality and identifiably New World thought that will later be exhibited in the essays of Jorge Luis Borges and Octavio Paz.

Another central theme signaled by these early essayists is that of the conflict between civilization and barbarism. In Martí's view, the struggle in Latin America is not necessarily between the civilized and the barbaric (Ariel vs. Caliban in Rodó's terms) but rather between what he called false learning and nature.[3] Rodó, however, agrees only to the extent that he sees barbarism as resulting from false learning or from inferior ways of thinking and feeling. Like many of their descendants, Martí and Rodó do agree that the North American mind is too Germanic in composition, too rigid and insensitive, and that the Latin American must therefore take care not to be over-influenced by the northern culture, even when both authors can find aspects of United States life they feel are truly worthy of praise. Rodó, for example, cites Emerson as having noted an important lesson for Latin America:

> The masses will be an instrument of barbarism or civilization, depending on whether there is lacking or not the factor of a high moral direction. There is a profound truth at the base of Emerson's paradox, which requires that each nation on the globe be judged according to the minority and not the majority of its inhabitants. A civilized people acquires its character, not from the proof of its prosperity or of its material greatness, but from the superior ways of thinking and feeling that within them are possible.[4]

Although the Rodó-Emerson position may sound elitist in that it advocates a leadership of intellectual and moral superiors, Martí agrees that unfortunately, left to themselves, the uneducated will rule "from their habit of attacking and resolving their doubts with their hands."[5] Martí rejects, as does Rodó, what the former calls the exotic man and champions rather the natural, the man who knows the strengths of his nation and also recognizes superior intelligence yet will not be mistreated

by those who would take advantage of his poor background. This whole matter will inevitably lead to a view in Latin American literature that the natural man does in fact represent a higher moral character, prompting a grass roots movement to recover the origins of Latin American culture, to return to the primitive instinct as superior to that of the rational but corrupting European mentality.

None of the arguments begun by Martí and Rodó have been settled, and much of the discussion in essays by Octavio Paz and Mario Benedetti, as well as in books by Sarmiento (Facundo) and Martínez Estrada (X-Ray of the Pampa), searches for a definition of the uniquely Latin American mind and of a way to avoid the pitfalls of both civilization and barbarism. Whereas Rodó was exclusively an essayist and Martí's essays make up four-fifths of his total literary output (his poetry remaining of some interest to contemporary readers), essayists like Paz of Mexico and Benedetti of Uruguay are known as well for their poetry and short stories. As a result, both Paz and Benedetti have written many essays on individual Latin American authors and painters, as well as on those of Spain, France, and the United States, concerning themselves equally with questions of literary style and political or social issues. (It is true that Rodó and Martí wrote of Rubén Darío and Whitman respectively, but essentially their interests were social more than literary.) Even in their critical studies of authors and literary movements, however, there surfaces in the essays of Paz and Benedetti a continuing urge to define the nature of Latin American life and to contrast it, as did Martí and Rodó, with that of the United States. Certainly every genre of literature is a suitable means for definition, yet the essay seems particularly to have been adopted by these authors for purposes of a discursive approach to the paradoxes of Latin American character, and perhaps it is to the essay that we should look for the fullest treatment of this important theme. Given the expository nature of the genre, it can also aid greatly in clarifying the issues involved in this question of Latin American character when we elsewhere find it being treated through the poem, short story, novel, or play. All of which suggests, then, that one possible historical and unifying approach to the study of Latin American essays might be this of a focus on their definition of Latin American life and literature in relation to questions of civilization and barbarism and of an attitude toward the United States as either a positive or a negative influence.

Known widely for his book-length study of the Mexican nature, The Labyrinth of Solitude, Octavio Paz offers for students another work, Alternating Current,[6] that is peculiarly suited to a number of courses, from freshman English to Latin American studies. An essay such as "Revolt," the final selection in this far-ranging work, may be read not only as an extension of the Martí-Rodó question as to what is appropriate to Latin America but also as an introduction to the entire field of Latin American thinking. The author's topics can well serve as subjects

for a student's own compositions, and even as a model for the study of stylistic and rhetorical devices.[7]

Like Martí and Rodó, Octavio Paz finds his northern neighbor both a source of valuable lessons and a threat to the southern self. In developing his thesis that Latin America is rebelling against misunderstanding and misuse, Paz calls for greater self-examination, simultaneously praising the United States for its own rebellious nature and suggesting that Latin America cannot simply imitate another nation. The essay "Revolt" can be approached from several curriculum standpoints, including composition and rhetoric, history, and the humanities. Each of the following excerpts exemplify possible uses the essay can be made to serve:

> It [the Third World] feels a fascination and a horror, a love and an envy of its former masters; it wants to be both like the "developed nations" and unlike them. [194]

> The United States is the world center of economic and political power but it is also the world center of rebellion and self-criticism. This is what Latin Americans seldom see. [195]

> . . . new armies of bureaucrats and "experts." These latter are the modern form of the plague; while in the past smallpox and malaria decimated the population, this new plague from abroad paralyzes people's minds and imaginations. [195-196]

> The most urgent task confronting the Third World is to regain its own being and face up to the realities of its situation. This requires pitiless self-criticism, and an equally rigorous examination of the true nature of its relations to modern ideas. These in many cases have been mere superficial borrowings . . . [196]

Insightful in terms of what they say about United States and Latin American relations, about the need for "knowing thyself," these excerpts may serve as well in the teaching of traditional rhetoric: construction of the balanced sentence (note Paz's effective use of the semi-colon), of the connotative use of analogy (disease-experts-plague-paralysis), of comparison and contrast (the United States as economic center but also as center for self-criticism), and of paradoxical reactions (love-envy; fear-fascination). Further, this particular essay develops by means of definition, with the author attempting to distinguish between the terms "revolution" and "revolt." In line with his fundamental concern to discover the nature of a true Latin American personality, Paz, like Martí and Rodó, defines the Third World heterogeneity by setting it against the West, stating that "it [the Third World] is the <u>other</u> by definition" [193]. Although this basic technique of contrast is natural to the theme of revolt (this against that), the contrast of terms, "revolution" and "revolt," is meant more to indicate Paz's attitude toward a meaningful "universal phenomenon" (a phrase he quotes from his earlier work, <u>The Labyrinth of Solitude</u>) that he believes the word "revolt" characterizes and that he employs to mean the recognition of man's plural nature, of the validity of differences in the <u>others</u>, and of the contemporary aspiration "to give otherness a place in historical life" [201]. Thus, by his use of such a traditional rhetorical tool as contrast, Paz

offers at once a composition model and an insight into the contemporary significance of Latin American "revolution," which the author would identify or define more accurately as "revolt," linking it to a universal and timeless need: "Revolt is the criticism of masks, the beginning of genuine dialogue. It is the creation of our own faces" [202].

A second use of Paz's Alternating Current can be that appropriate to the historical or humanities approach. Again, by means of contrast, Paz suggests the the unique qualities of Latin America, in terms of its differences from other Third World nations historically, socially, and religiously (Christianity rather than Mohammedanism or Hinduism) as well as of its dissimilarity to the United States (essentially based on the latter's desire to create a "global hegemony" in its own image and thus eliminate the other). This theme is further developed in a number of essays in the collection, such as "Satiety and Nausea," where again a contrast of present and past, a distinction between revolt and revolution, and a comparison of a modern instance of rebellion (emancipation of women) with an ancient one (the change from a hunting to an agricultural society) all demonstrate the use of basic rhetorical devices in the treatment of historical and humanistic topics. Unifying his views of contemporary events and their implications for modern man is Paz's belief that in order to maintain any functioning society there must be healthy self-criticism. The essays in this collection present, therefore, an overview of Latin American issues and make it possible for the student to consider them as part and parcel of the history of modern man and as illustration of the author's awareness and integration of current events, such as the rise of Third World cultures, women's rights, youth movements, technological dangers, and other basically humanistic issues.

The range of the essays in Alternating Current is an especially attractive feature of this collection, for through its unifying vision of a world of correspondences to be discovered by means of verbal systems (see particularly "The Verbal Pact and Correspondence," "Revolt, Revolution, Rebellion," and "The Verbal Round"), the book relates literature and the arts to the work of such thinkers as Rousseau, Breton, Sade, Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, McLuhan, and many others. In this respect the collection is a compendium of learning, of well-digested ideas, integrated into essays brief enough to serve as composition models but intelligent enough to provide materials for courses in literature, art, linguistics, philosophy, and psychology. Paz's book can present the student verbally with the same type of panorama as that offered visually by the movie "Why Man Creates" and can be taught profitably in conjunction with that extraordinary film. Although it may be admitted that many of the discussions may confuse both student and teacher, the essays will serve as an important introduction to language as it functions between the natural and cultural worlds, will raise highly stimulating questions, can suggest possible areas for research and investigative papers, and will demonstrate effectively the sophisticated level at

which a Latin American author is considering the function of language and literature in terms of man's non-animal needs--his morals, his passions, and his creation of symbols from nature that will aid in expressing and exploring his experience. Finally, as models for composition, Paz's essays will furnish the student with stimulating and fundamental examples of a genre that should challenge him to think and write more effectively even as he learns of Latin American ideas and expression.

Another significant essayist who can serve equally as a model for rhetorical patterns and as a stimulus to thoughtful discussion and composition is Jorge Luis Borges. Taught either in conjunction with Paz's Alternating Current, on its own, or as part of such courses as literature, philosophy, or freshman composition, Borges's Other Inquisitions offers further insights into the workings of literary art, another compendium of learning, and a brilliant introduction to uses of irony, oxymoron, comparison and contrast, paradox, and almost every imaginable rhetorical device.[8] Both the Borges and the Paz books are usefully indexed to aid in pursuing basic themes ("social contract" in Paz or "infinity" in Borges) and to discover summary statements on leading thinkers (Schopenhauer in Borges or Ortega y Gasset in Paz). Although Borges is not concerned so immediately with Latin America, focusing more on a vision of the timeless and infinite hidden within the finite and time-bound, looked at indirectly Borges can be seen to summarize all Latin American literature even when he does not mention its places or authors, much in the way, as he says of the Koran, a lack of camels testifies to the authenticity of that work's Arabic origins. Just so, the Argentinian's meditations on dream and reality take on implications for all Latin America, whereas Paz in his essays reaches out contrariwise to the universal from his starting point in Mexico.

Having suggested various approaches to Paz as an essayist, I find it unnecessary to say more than a few words regarding Borges as a model for composition or a guide to literary philosophy, since those same approaches can be applied fruitfully as well to the Argentinian's essays. To cite at least two leading examples, however, of his suitableness to composition courses, I can mention "The Modesty of History" and "A Comment on August 23, 1944" as three-to-four-page essays containing integral ironies and paradoxes that are developed through a questioning of the nature of true (valuable) history as it relates to human motives that, as Paz would say, reveal our simultaneous attraction for and repulsion by such an idea as Naziism. The paragraphing in both of these essays is superb-logically developed to overwhelming conclusions, with all the learning and subtle humor characteristic of Borges at his best. Additionally, both essays concern themselves with "history"-specific dates and persons-and can be studied as examples of how to interpret seemingly insignificant events in terms of the great issues confronting men in all times and on so many crucial occasions. The essays in themselves are cultural histories-cataloguing, comparing, and contrasting racial, literary, philosophical, and mythical attitudes from past to

present. Another such essay is "The Wall and the Book," which again involves a close study of motives and paradoxical actions. This particular essay can be taught comparatively with Samuel Johnson's "The Pyramids,"[9] the two serving as complementary examples of interpretation of historical artifacts, the Chinese wall seen quite differently from the perspective of each author's century and of his own philosophical vision of the nature of man.

Other outstanding essayists from Latin America offer similar insights and stylistic excellences for study and imitation. Ernesto Cardenal in his collection In Cuba provides subjects more limited in scope but equally valid for rhetoric courses and classes in contemporary issues.[10] A number of essayists-novelists, such as Lezama Lima and Ernesto Sábato, are not readily available in translation but demonstrate the high quality attained in the genre and should be considered especially for Spanish language courses. Luis Harss's important Into the Mainstream[11] contains in-depth studies and interviews with leading Latin American authors, as does Rita Guibert's Seven Voices[12] and Mario Benedetti's Los poetas comunicantes.[13] A humorous treatment of many serious Latin American themes, such as the relationship between Latin and Anglo, is to be found in Marco A. Almazán's Episodios nacionales en salsa verde,[14] not available in translation but a delightful collection of contemporary versions of Mexican historical events and famous figures that throw new light on the national character and on the same issue of a need for self-criticism discussed by Martí, Rodó, and Paz. Finally, the memoirs of Pablo Neruda offer essay-like chapters that could well serve as models of subjective and impressionistic writing for composition assignments devoted to autobiographical sketches and personal memories.[15] Two other works I find useful in conneciton with such assignments are the biography of Jelly Roll Morton (Mister Jelly Lord by Alan Lomax) and Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography, which contrast interestingly with the less braggadocio manner of Neruda and point up the poet's greater concern, in the first half of the work at least, with the lives of people he knew and admired, even such an enemy as the senator who opposed his politics yet aided him in escaping safely across the Andes into exile. Finally, there are many fine critical essays that can be used both as models of composition and as introductions to Latin American literature, especially those pieces, either in Spanish or in translation, by Emir Rodríguez Monegal of Uruguay.

For a course devoted entirely to modern essayists, both Paz and Borges will make significant contributions by accompanying such works as William Carlos Williams's In the American Grain, D. H. Lawrence's Studies in Classic American Literature, Henry Miller's The Air Conditioned Nightmare, James Baldwin's Notes of a Native Son, and Roland Barthes's Mythologies, all of which offer the finest instances of contemporary essay style, with each in its own way attempting a definition of how and why modern western man is what he is. Without forcing the issue or struggling to find an excuse on the basis of a strictly "Latin American" approach, I believe

the essay as written by Paz, Borges, and any number of other Latin American authors can take its place as a pattern for good, sound writing, as an introduction to contemporary issues, and above all as an entrance into some of the most profound thinking of the modern age.

Notes

1. José Martí, "Nuestra América," Páginas escogidas (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe Argentina, 1954), p. 116. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
2. José Enrique Rodó, Ariel (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1968), p. 35.
3. Martí, p. 116.
4. Rodó, p. 26. That North American literature itself can be studied with this same thematic consideration in mind has been suggested by Karl Shapiro in his essay, "What Is American Poetry?" in American Poetry (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1960). Shapiro writes that "one of the most extraordinary facts about the new America was and is the rapid disappearance of Old World traits and the evolution of a common American personality. Writers have from time to time appeared shocked at this cultural amnesia and have frequently interpreted it as 'materialism,' 'isolationism,' or just an ordinary lapse into frontier barbarism. American folklore, with its love for the shooting cowboy, the gangster, and the boy who goes from rags to riches, tends to corroborate the image of the American without a past. The image is repeated in serious American literature as well with the heroic Huck Finn lighting out for the frontier to escape civilization, and the martyred Billy Budd who cannot comprehend the mores of organized society [p. 2, my italics].
5. Martí, p. 116.
6. Octavio Paz, Alternating Current, trans. Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking, 1973).
7. As an inexpensive paperback in translation, this, like the other books recommended in this guide, is designed to serve practical needs. Although Benedetti's essays are not available in translation and many essayists like Alejo Carpentier and Ignacio Valente, who have written regularly for newspapers in Venezuela and Chile respectively, are not in translation either, some use can certainly be made of these writers in Spanish language courses for purposes of brief translation or prose-style analysis exercises, simply by mimeographing excerpts or, in Carpentier's case, either translating for the student or presenting in their entirety examples of his very brief articles available in Letra y solfa (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nemont, 1976). Benedetti's study of Nicanor Parra's anti-poetry is especially useful as an introduction to the Chilean poet's relationship to the Beat poetry movement in United States literature; it is available in Mario Benedetti's Letras del continente mestizo (Montevideo: Arca Editorial S. R. L., 1967).
8. Jorge Luis Borges, Other Inquisitions, trans. Ruth L. C. Simms (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968).
9. Samuel Johnson, "The Pyramids," The Norton Reader (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 280.
10. Ernesto Cardenal, In Cuba, trans. Donald D. Walsh (New York: New Directions, 1974).
11. Luis Harss and Barbara Dohmann, Into the Mainstream (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).
12. Rita Guibert, Seven Voices, trans. Frances Partridge (New York: Knopf, 1973).
13. Mario Benedetti, Los poetas comunicantes (Montevideo: Biblioteca de Marcha, 1972).
14. Marco A. Almazán, Episodios nacionales en salsa verde (Mexico City: Editorial Jus, 1970).
15. Pablo Neruda, Memoirs, trans. Hardie St. Martin (Baltimore: Penguin, 1978).

Short Story

Latin American short prose fiction, as with any sophisticated examples of this form-a genre with a relatively short but significant international history-offers the student of literature works that are both technically and intellectually stimulating, as well as highly instructive. At least a dozen countries have contributed work of the first order, stories that can be studied as models for all the traditional fictive devices, such as point of view, characterization, plot, setting, dialogue, symbolism, and thematic development; at the same time, these very selections can be considered as expressions of Latin American culture, of the Latin American mind, of the enrichment of the Spanish language in the hands of Latin American authors, and of concerns peculiar to the literature of a Third World area in the process of discovering, creating, or re-creating its own unique identity.

A number of comprehensive anthologies of Latin American short stories have been made available in recent years, so that almost every prominent author of short fiction is now available to English readers. Since the short story is easily anthologized, examples of important themes and techniques are to be found in almost every collection devoted entirely to the Latin American short story (such as the fine and inexpensive Premier paperback, Contemporary Latin American Short Stories, edited by P. M. Mancini), or in those gathering poetry, essays, and novel excerpts (The TriQuarterly Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Literature, Doors and Mirrors, The Borzoi Anthology of Latin American Literature), or in such a selection as Penguin's Latin American Writing Today, or even in commercial texts intended for college introductory fiction courses (The Short Story from McGraw-Hill, The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction, The Short Story: Fiction in Transition).[1] The accessibility of the short story, then, makes it a natural choice for inclusion in any course on short fiction or dealing with literature in general. The fact that it is preferred by most students and teachers because of length and readability adds to its attractiveness as a starting point for introducing Latin American literature and all of its concomitant areas of instruction.

Historically the Latin American short story begins with the Brazilian Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, whose longish short story, "The Psychiatrist,"

predates even Chekhov's "Ward Six" in its treatment of the theme of who's crazy, the patient or the physician--the question of which is worse, the illness or the cure.[2] Although Machado wrote in the latter half of the nineteenth century, his stories remain strikingly contemporary in both style and theme. Few other Latin American writers prior to the 1940s maintain the kind of lasting contemporaneity achieved by Machado with his use of an almost naturalistic-impressionistic style that seems a strange combination of Kafka, Joyce, and Laurence Sterne in its presentation, in an often episodic manner, of either the absurdity or the tender anguish of characters tormented by a hopeless passion or an obsessive idea. As a mulatto, Machado de Assis seems to represent in himself a blend of intellectual and emotional forces in conflict and in eerie harmony, the very qualities that contribute to the making of his short stories a mixture of rare but deeply human impulses. And just as, chronologically speaking, he heads the list of important Latin American fictionists, so too in his characterization of Brazilian figures torn between opposing interpretations of reality and plagued by a thought of the past that renders the present almost unbearable, Machado has anticipated many of the central themes of twentieth-century Latin American short fiction. Rodríguez Monegal has pointed out that in García Márquez's popular One Hundred Years of Solitude the author is "erasing the distinction between reality and fantasy . . . to present--in one sentence and on the same metaphorical level--the 'narrative truth' of what his fictional characters live and dream."[3] Machado in many ways presents this same double existence in his less surrealistic but equally revealing studies of a character's real and oneiric lives. Both stylistically and thematically Machado de Assis may serve as an introduction to the modern short story, precursor as he was of such masters as Chekhov, Kafka, and Joyce, as well as of the younger "boom" fictionists of Latin America and those of the rest of the world of contemporary prose fiction influenced in turn by Latin American writing.

Whereas Machado de Assis seems to have sprung up in Brazil almost entirely unnurtured by any foreign literary influences (though certainly he knew his Sterne well), the importation of Edgar Allan Poe's fertilizing imagination to Argentina and Uruguay produced a strain of grotesque and highly artistic stories from the pens of first Horacio Quiroga and later of both Borges and Cortázar. Closer to Poe in both time and temperament, Quiroga does not, however, represent a mere imitator of the North American, any more than does Borges or Cortázar. Many of Quiroga's stories may be studied in conjunction with Poe's, and the latter's "Philosophy of Composition" was certainly a self-confessed model for Quiroga's "Manual of the Perfect Short Story Writer," in which like Poe the Uruguayan calls for "knowing from the first word where you are going."[4] Yet even though the debt to Poe is great, Quiroga in his later stories, such as "Drifting" and "The Dead Man," creates a wholly Latin American landscape that is significantly integrated into the organic structure and

meaning of the tales. The emphasis is no longer on simply achieving an "effect" on the reader but more on the impact of the fact of death on a common man who evaluates his entire life and environment in the face of his impending loss of both. Quiroga's treatment of river, jungle, and the daily life of a worker in the Uruguayan interior--his relationship to the environment with its constant hazards and its undependable human relationships--offers a realistic view of one aspect of Latin American existence, even as it demonstrates an authentic artist borrowing and transforming materials and techniques from another literary tradition.

Borges, likewise, as he always does, turns inside-out the tried and true pattern established by Poe, the originator of the art story, and gives in the process a new twist or "turn of the screw" to the Poe-Henry James detective-intellectual genre of short prose fiction. In "Death and the Compass," Borges presents the mind of the criminal who understands so well the detective-intellectual's rational approach that the latter is deceived and destroyed by what may ultimately be seen as an over-dependence on deduction, which leads the clever Lönnrot to a dead-end trap from which he does not escape as would 007.[5] We may or may not wish to concede that a certain didacticism is at work in Borges's fiction, and the same goes for Poe's work. In terms of the genre itself, the detective-art story may be studied in a high tradition that includes Poe, Chesterton, and more recently Nabokov (in Pale Fire), writers who emphasize the analytical, the formal, the how more often than the who. Above all there is an emphasis on form, on method. As Poe's famous detective Dupin says, in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," of the ineffective work of the police, "There is no method in their proceedings, beyond the method of the moment." In both Poe and Borges it is the perception of similarities that especially fascinates them: " 'The material world,' continued Dupin [in "The Purloined Letter"], 'abounds with the strict analogies to the immaterial.'"

More than Poe or any other detective fictionist, however, Borges is intent on suggesting that the solution to a mystery may only reveal a greater mystery, a larger "crime," or even a certain death in terms of those who "solve" the mystery. In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," Dupin, his name associated with a famous French criminal who later turned detective, represents somewhat the inverse of Borges's Scharlach in "Death and the Compass." Borges may well have had this possibility (based on the life of François Vidocq) in mind when he created his antagonist, who, as a criminal once imprisoned as a result of Lönnrot's participation in the case, gains his revenge (Dupin's motive in solving the case of "The Purloined Letter") by understanding and misleading the policial mind, in much the same way that Dupin handled the criminal mind. Borges thus demonstrates that it can work the other way around and that the method in reverse can entrap those who become what Poe calls in "The Fall of the House of Usher" victims of an "excessive and habitual" practice. In Borges, however, the central theme may be simply that of so many of his other

stories, what Rodríguez Monegal calls "the terrible reality of this world of appearances."[6] Lönnrot is misled by a pattern of clues that he takes to be unconsciously and carelessly left behind by the criminal. What Lönnrot faces in the end is perhaps the knowledge of his own self-deception. As Rodríguez Monegal also suggests of other Borges stories, the revelation in the Argentinian's work is often of an abysmal secret and is related to the kind of discovery made by Oedipus. (This too, of course, is characteristic of Poe.) The labyrinth through which Lönnrot traces his ingenious ways leads him ultimately to his own downfall, to a realization of his false pride in powers of logical analysis. Rodríguez Monegal, without referring specifically to this tale, summarizes the nature of Borges's detective story and helps us see how classic it is in terms of the nature of man: "That the revelation is painful, that it can be tragic (as it was for Oedipus) or totally destructive (as it was for the Minotaur), is something that Borges's work, in spite of its apparent rationality, its deliberately lucid look, does not fail to insinuate."[7]

Closely allied to the theme of self-deception and self-discovery is Borges's passion for suggesting that dream and reality are the same, that what we take to be reality can be a dream, and vice-versa. Although many of Poe's narrators are deceived by their unwillingness to recognize their own mental disorders, others are deeply concerned to solve a mystery, to discover what is wrong, or to demonstrate that in reality the "case" is perfectly clear. Borges's characters, however, may simply be deceived by their inability to distinguish between dream and reality or, when they do attempt to reach the center of an enigma, are destroyed by its reality or by the truth that, as with Oedipus, there is no cure. In all cases the search fails to turn out to be merely a game of wit. Though akin to Poe's analytical tales, which follow the evidence down passageways of demented minds, Borges's stories correspond more closely to an existential search for the self, ending often with the conclusion that we are being dreamed by another, that our reality is not only transitory but illusory. For this reason Borges often parodies our vain attempts to prove our reality or our rationality. In this sense perhaps he has also borrowed something from Poe, but for all this we tend to see in Borges a thinker closer to the twentieth-century ironic and parodic attitudes than to the nineteenth's allegorical vision, which often takes itself more seriously than we feel comfortable with today. Even then, however, Poe's sense of humor is subtle and his power of parody may well have influenced Borges as much as this century's natural bent for the parodic.

Another area shared by both writers is the one of perception, including an obsessive concentration on sights and sounds (Usher and "The Tale-Tell Heart" in Poe; "Funes the Memorious" and "The Shape of the Sword" in Borges), reflection of one thing in another (Usher, "The Black Cat" in Poe; "The Garden of the Forking Paths" and "Theme of the Traitor and the Hero" in Borges), and the transformation or

transference of one personality into another through an oppressive or insistent attachment (Usher, "Berenice," "Ligeia" in Poe; "South," "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" in Borges). Much of this same interest in obsessive perception, which leads to a confusion (either positively or negatively) in the mind of the narrator, is characteristic of Cortázar as well (see especially "Axolotl," in which the narrator becomes the salamander he has watched at an aquarium, or "Blow-Up," in which the narrator continues to build up a scene out of all proportion).[8] Another Argentinian writer who also employs Poe-like elements in this respect is Ernesto Sábato, whose The Tunnel is reminiscent of "The Black Cat" in its presentation of a painter who attempts to justify his murder of the only person who understood his art.[9] (Even Juan Rulfo's "Talpa" can be read somewhat in these terms, i.e., confession of fratricide.) The impact of Poe, then, seems pervasive and can serve as the starting point for a comparative study of Argentine and Urugruayan short fiction from the perspectives of detective fiction, the art story, the split personality, the obsessive (in terms of heightened senses or of self-justification), and the conflict between dream and reality or reason and self-deception.

Through Poe, Borges himself may have acted as an inspiration for almost every Latin American author since the Second World War. From the point of view especially of playfulness and existential anguish, Borges has inspired Julio Cortázar to the creation of masterful stories that are a combination of these two seemingly imcompatible positions. Although Cortázar too is a student of Poe (having spent years translating all of the North American's work into Spanish--see Luis Harss's Into the Mainstream), the Argentinian has emphasized a dichotomy between art and reality that hits at the heart of a contemporary disillusion, a disenchantment even with the sacred role of writer, that is felt among many contemporary artists at the very moment they are seriously involved in its practice (see again "Blow-Up"). Despite Cortázar's adaptation of Poe's fundamental detective plotting (the solving or pursuing of dark mysteries in houses--see "Casa tomada," "Bestiary," which can be linked significantly with Henry James's "The Beast in the Jungle," and 62: A Model Kit) and of Poe's central theme of the obsessive personality (which comes to insanity and suicide in both "A Letter to a Young Lady in Paris" and Hopscotch), Cortázar cannot be satisfied merely to repeat Poe's idea, that of achieving a combination of imaginative and analytical insight, which the North American saw as the sole means to both an effective and an affective tale. For one thing, Cortázar, like all Latin American writers, is torn between his desires to be an artist and to be an aware social critic. For this reason he is constantly restrained by social consciousness from becoming a "pure" artist. In "Letter to a Young Lady in Paris" the narrator acknowledges that he is allowing his obsession (with bunnies he himself vomits--a corollary to the creative imagination) to distract him from keeping up with

political history: "asking myself where the two [bunnies] are that are missing . . . and the presidency of Rivadavia which is what I want to read in Lopez's history [of Argentina]."[10] The playfulness, then, attempts to offset the existential anguish, or serves at times to reflect in irrationality the response to such anguish. Although Borges does not seem deeply concerned by everyday politics or social struggle, the playfulness and anguish of his own work stems perhaps from a similar sense of the irreconcilable nature of the world as a conflict of dream and reality. And although Cortázar may feel this conflict more than Borges, in terms of the present social realities, he himself rarely manages to espouse any real social message in his work. (The exception would be El Libro de Manuel, generally considered an artistic failure, which only demonstrates his difficulty in attempting to be both artist and program director.) Yet both Borges and Cortázar are deeply conscious of Argentine history, of a sense in their own works of the conflict between past and present, between dream and reality, which may well be a reflection of all Latin America's search for a meaningful past and a fulfilling future, the recovery of a continent's dream and the making of it a present-day reality. With readers of Borges this has been a thorny point, since most Latin Americans have disliked his lack of commitment. Regarding his detective fiction, Ronald Christ identifies this as a functional characteristic of the genre when he speaks of Borges's work as typical of detective fiction in that it presents "an esthetic problem in logic . . . quite formal and lucid without necessary commitment to its subject matter."[11] Nonetheless, Borges and his followers do in fact have a profound awareness of history, and their works often reflect an interest in specific events that strike them as symbolic of the Latin American experience.

Although a return to the past can be, of course, a form of romanticism equivalent to Poe's rather overdone gothic atmospherics, to most Latin American fictionists a concern for their history involves more than nostalgia for gaucho life or quaint Indians. Cortázar's short story "Silvia," though highly romantic in its celebration of the world of children, may serve as an instance of the contemporary author's urge to recapture not only innocence but insight, and authentic imagination, usually identified with a type of paradise to be associated with the primitive roots of Latin America--in this story the young girl's name is a reference in fact to forests and primeval nature.[12] (Through her name and its association with selva and salvaje, Silvia is a counterpart to Vargas Llosa's Bonifacia in The Green House. Nicknamed Wildflower by Josefino, she is a girl from the jungle--Anselmo, she suggests, may have been born there too--and is considered alternately a savage and an innocent exploited by church and state, which could apply as well to Anselmo.) This urge to restore to the writer and to his reader a virgin vision of the instincts and values of an earlier Latin America is shared by artists of almost every nation, from Asturias in Guatemala to Carpentier in Cuba and García Márquez in Colombia. In each

case the primitive values are associated with Indian cultures, Blacks, or a lower-class figure who maintains a sense of integrity in the face of exploitation or oppression. It is easy once again to recognize this return to or maintenance of integrity as the sermon preached by Martí and Rodó. More generally, this same theme of the recovery of past glory, or of celebration of a moment when the little man stands up against the corruption of society, the exploitation of foreign powers, or the dictator figure, is especially characteristic of Third World literature, yet it can also be related to the minority consciousness-raising movements begun by Black, Chicano, and Native American authors in the United States. In Latin America this theme has been handled by any number of leading fictionists, but three examples should serve to illustrate the wide variety of stylistic approaches, settings, and types of character studies and the distinct racial values identified through a reference to past traditions or to a memorable confrontation between the individual and the powers that be.

In Asturias's collection of Guatemalan legends, Leyendas de Guatemala, the author attempts to recover what one critic has called "the great Mayan narrative and its role of being the Grand Tongue of its people."[13] By retelling Mayan legends Asturias returns us to the world of the Indian vision of life, where the spoken word was sacred, where to speak it correctly could bewitch or exorcize, where the timeless and subconscious were recognized as the true realms to be inhabited or contacted by means of the ancient rites at festivals in honor of sun or moon. In one particular legend, "Of the Tablets That Sing," the main character is an aging Mayan poet who has never written a prize-winning poem at the annual festival in homage to the moon. Utuquel, the poet, comes to hear his poem read by the judges, and the power of its imagery--treating trees as warriors struggling against a hurricane--causes a storm to break out at the end of the reading, reenacting the very description of the poem. The transcendental relationship between spoken word and natural phenomenon is underlined by this event and suggests the timeless connection between naming and nature. By returning us to this Mayan world Asturias reminds us of the primal forces at work in our own world and urges us to appreciate the truths apprehended by primitive societies, truths that seem universal and yet in sharp contrast to the logical, unreligious doctrines of western culture. Stylistically we can observe that in Indian legend Asturias has rediscovered the same tendency toward "magic realism" that has become the hallmark of much Latin American literature of this century.[14]

Another story that involves a racial tradition similar to that of the Mayan in Asturias is Alejo Carpentier's "Journey to the Source."[15] The Spanish word "semilla" has been variously translated, but more literally as "seed" it suggests even further the idea of a return to the beginnings of life, or in this case the beginnings of consciousness in terms of what the protagonist originally conceived of as important in his life, a conception he has lost contact with the farther from that

"source" he has moved--much in the way Wordsworth's child loses touch with the "clouds of glory." In order to parallel the idea of a return to roots or sources, Carpentier has constructed his story in reverse, beginning at the end of the character's life and tracing backward to his earliest, most meaningful memories. As a further instance of "magic realism" Carpentier's story contains the remarkable image of Marcial's half-demolished house being reconstructed by the wave of his old black friend's cane over the cemetery of tiles and stones. We see the flowers hurling the heavy bricks back into place, reminiscent perhaps of Kurt Vonnegut's restoration of Dresden in Slaughter-house Five. As a retrospective tale, the events or memories are seen as ironically gaining vitality and validity as they "progress" backwards. Marcial's marriage and professional life are revealed as failures--his wife having committed suicide à la Ophelia in Hamlet--and he and his entire career are summarized as "a man of flesh made into a man of paper." By moving backward we become aware that what Marcial has turned into is precisely what he despised as a boy--a man decorated with meaningless medals as his father before him, involved in a business life where people smell like the notary trade (papers, notes, legal pads). In contrast to this worldly odor are Marcial's boyhood memories of playing on the cold pavement, where he did not sweat as did the grownups seated on their velvet cushions. (Much of this, thematically and technically, can be related to Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilich.") Perhaps the ultimate memory, and also ironically one of the earliest, is of the black friend, Melchor, who we assume has put this life story back together again. Melchor is not only the remem-berer but the strongest, most valued memory from Marcial's past, since the Black who "came from very far away" symbolizes through his African heritage the qualities of friendship, of the legendary captive prince (a fairy tale convention) who once led his people, conquered wild animals, and knew songs "easy to learn, because the words had no meaning and were repeated often." (This whole mythical symbol may remind us of Faulkner's treatment of the Black, and even of the White in his similar "Old Man.") Marcial recognized unconsciously as a child that Melchor was a man whose shoes he would want to fill. Ironically the meaningless words of Melchor are the most memorable, as again they represent the valued relationship between Marcial and the black servant. Like the black magus (traditionally identified as Melchior, though unnamed in the Bible), Melchor is truly the wise man whose memory Marcial treasures and whose figure remains for him a reminder of the source of wisdom he lost along his worldly way.

A third story, "Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon," by García Márquez, may also contain a biblical allusion to the three Wise Men, though perhaps less clear than Carpentier's.[16] Certainly Balthazar is celebrated for his integrity, for the wisdom of not selling out to the grownups but instead giving away his "flight of imagination" to a young boy rather than give in to the demands of people in better positions socially and economically than the old cage-maker. Although nothing comes of his act, his friends at the pool hall even misinterpreting Balthazar's "victory" in thinking he

sold the cage for a high price, and even though he loses a watch and his shoes from getting drunk in celebration (something he had never done before), the event becomes for him "the happiest dream of his life." Another story from this same collection (No One Writes to the Colonel) also concerns the confrontation of high and low: "One of These Days," in which two figures who are opponents, not so much socially as politically, face off in the office of the subservient dentist. The mayor of the town must submit to sitting in the dentist's chair and allowing him to pull one of his teeth without the relief of anaesthesia. The pleasure the dentist takes in watching the mayor squirm and suffer at his hands amounts to a symbolic victory over the local boss, who has killed several revolutionary friends of the dentist. An extremely short story, it is ideal for teaching in Spanish first year courses, especially useful as a practical introduction to the vocabulary of a dentist office. As representative of almost a Latin American sub-genre devoted to the meeting of high and low, this story can be profitably compared with Asturias's El Señor Presidente, in which on the other and more frequent side of the picture a poor woman is being ruthlessly interrogated by the authorities while her breast-fed baby dies of hunger. Another such story is Cabrera Infante's "Apocalypse in Wonderland," in which a hungry youth visits a rich politician, probably a sometime lover of his mother (reminiscent of Pedro Páramo), and is shot to death in reply to his request for a start in life.[17] In Juan Rulfo's Pedro Páramo the cacique's faithful lawyer, expecting a generous sum at his retirement, is left waiting and waiting, never to receive a red cent for his loyalty (immoral or no). From either viewpoint, of the victorious or the subject, this is a theme full of meaning in Latin America and charged with drama both as a realistic and as a symbolic plot.

On another level the confrontation of high and low is often the archetypal one of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. This is illustrated, for example, in Augusto Roa Bastos's Yo el supremo, in which the dictator and his amanuensis represent the idealist and the realist, updated in terms of the political figure as a self-deceived version of Quixote. In one of his short stories, "The Living Tomb," Roa Bastos presents another instance of the dictator-type, who in this case loses his mind as a result of the death of his daughter at the hands of a monster whom the landowner father allowed to ravage the land when it only meant the lives of worthless peasants.[18] The fact that the mistreatment of low by high will one day be reversed is certainly true of many Latin American uprisings. Involved here too is the same unresolved question as to whether the primitive or the civilized represent high or low from a moral standpoint. Certainly this particular theme, of high and low or haves and have-nots, is rich in implications for modern Latin America and has been treated effectively by authors from almost every nation, since all have witnessed it first-hand in one form or another.

Just as the number of stories worth teaching would easily reach a score or more, the possible approaches are also legion. For example, I have said nothing so

far of the stories of Juan Carlos Onetti, whose "A Dream Come True" can be compared favorably and usefully with Pirandello's "Six Characters in Search of an Author."[19] His "Welcome, Bob" may be considered as fitting somewhat into the Poe tradition but seems essentially sui generis.[20] Both stories are readily available in translation and deserve inclusion in any survey of Latin American short fiction. In discussing the influence of Poe on Quiroga and on many Argentine fictionists I have wanted to suggest the possibilities of a comparative approach, at the same time hoping to demonstrate that it would be appropriate to study any number of short fictionists in terms of the mystery mode. Beyond Borges's and Cortázar's "mysteries" there is, for instance, Carlos Fuentes's "The Doll Queen," which also attempts to unravel a mystery and penetrate to the heart of a "secret ceremony," only to discover once more an emptiness and solitude hidden from the "detective" by his own lack of sensitivity.[21] In Ernesto Sábato's Sobre héroes y tumbas, the section on the blind, reprinted in the TriQuarterly Anthology, recalls many of Poe's narrators who are obsessed with a feeling of being threatened or the victim of a conspiracy. An entire course can be and has been organized around the concept of detective fiction, and although a course could focus entirely on Latin American mystery fiction, any course devoted to this mode would not be complete without, at the very least, Borges's "Death and the Compass." Likewise, countless fictionists may be considered in terms of a return to roots or sources, of the confrontation between New World and Old or high and low. A story such as Juan Rulfo's "No Dogs Bark" can be approached especially from the viewpoint of a confrontation between two opposing sets of values or generations, the father representing the old order (though in this case standing most likely for the New World) and his worthless son the new (here related to the invasion of corrupting influences from the Old World that would reject the primitive values of a sense of community--the son riding on the father's shoulders just as the European has ridden the New World).[22] Certainly Rulfo's stories are not limited to this oversimplified scheme, since the fault so often lies within the individual characters yet seems the effect of human nature more than of any political or social corruption, any easy dichotomy between Old or New World concepts. Still, this pitting of high against low, primitive against civilized, is characteristic of Latin American literature, and although twentieth century authors have turned, as Ercilla did in La araucana, to champion more often than not the primitive over the civilized, the conflict between old and new, high and low remains a crucial question in Latin American literature, perhaps never to be completely resolved so long as the continent continues as an area of stark contrasts, both geographically and socially.

The short story, then, like the essay and any of the other literary genres, offers a wide variety of categories and perspectives within and from which to consider such an art work as an expression of both form and content. Although the study of Latin American literature may have to be restricted for purposes of fitting it into a

structured course schedule, one that may allow only a passing acquaintance with the richness of Latin American writing, even by means of a single rather inclusive approach the possibilities for discussion, composition, and outside research are unlimited, since the reach of a major category will indicate and provide fundamental insights into basic themes and techniques in short stories from every Latin American nation, thus furnishing the student with a key to some understanding and appreciation of the ideas and art of the other. Once he is aware of at least one broad issue as presented by representative works and has seen it being treated significantly and artistically in even a single short story, he will be prepared to recognize it elsewhere and to build on that recognition a fuller knowledge of the range and artistry of Latin American short fiction.

Notes

1. Contemporary Latin American Short Stories, ed. Pat McNees Mancini (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett, 1974).
The TriQuarterly Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Literature, ed. José Donoso and William Henkin (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969).
Doors and Mirrors, ed. Hortense Carpentier and Janet Brof (New York: Viking, 1973).
The Borzoi Anthology of Latin American Literature, vol. II, ed. Emir Rodríguez Monegal (New York: Knopf, 1977).
Latin American Writing Today, ed. J. M. Cohen (Baltimore: Penguin, 1967).
The Short Story: An Introduction, ed. Stone, Packer, and Hoopes (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976).
The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction, ed. R. V. Cassill (New York: Norton, 1973).
The Short Story: Fiction in Transition, ed. J. Chesley Taylor (New York: Scribner's, 1969).
2. Machado de Assis, The Psychiatrist and Other Stories, trans. Wm. L. Grossman and Helen Caldwell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).
3. TriQuarterly, p. 22.
4. Horacio Quiroga, The Decapitated Chicken, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976).
5. Jorge Luis Borges, Labyrinths, ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (New York: New Directions, 1964).
6. Emir Rodríguez Monegal, "Símbolos en la obra de Borges," in El cuento hispanoamericano ante la crítica, ed. Enrique Pupo-Walker (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1973), p. 109.
7. Ibid., p. 107.
8. Julio Cortázar, Blow-Up and Other Stories, trans. Paul Blackburn (New York: Collier, 1971).
9. Ernesto Sábato, The Outsider, trans. Harriet de Onis (New York: Knopf, 1950). The English version is out of print but in Spanish it is available as El túnel.
10. Cortázar, p. 41.
11. Ronald Christ, The Narrow Act (New York: New York University Press, 1969), p. 117.
12. Doors and Mirrors, pp. 372-383.
13. Richard J. Callan, "Asturias: El interior oscuro reflejado en 'El espejo de Lida Sal,'" in El cuento, p. 111 (see note 6 above).
14. Miguel Angel Asturias, Leyendas de Guatemala (Madrid: Salvat Editores, 1970); also in El espejo de Lida Sal (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1967). Although "Of the Tablets That Sing" is not available in translation, another legend, "El Cadejo," appears in Contemporary Latin American Short Stories (see note 1 above) and is representative of Asturias's powerful imagery and of his penchant in these legends for presenting a blend of the highly sensuous and supernatural. This legend can be compared with D. H. Lawrence's early story, "A Fragment of Stained Glass," for both thematic and technical similarities. (The Lawrence is reprinted in the Viking edition of his stories and in The Narrative Sensibility, ed. García and Hubenka [New York: McKay, 1976], which also includes Cortázar's "Blow-Up.") Still another Asturias tale available in translation, also presenting a mixture of superstition and sensuality, is the title story of El espejo de Lida Sal. "The Mirror of Lida Sal" is a variation on the Narcissus myth, a story emphasizing the imaginary and the unconscious through a use of anti-rational nature imagery linked to sleep and ritual.
15. Alejo Carpentier, "Journey to the Source," in War of Time, trans. Frances Partridge (New York: Knopf, 1970); also available in Contemporary Latin American Short Stories, The Borzoi Anthology, and Latin American Writing Today.
16. Gabriel García Márquez, "Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon," in No One Writes to the Colonel, trans. J. S. Bernstein (New York: Avon, 1973); also available in Doors and Mirrors and Contemporary Latin American Short Stories.

17. Guillermo Cabrera Infante, "Apocalypse in Wonderland," in Mundus Artium 3, no. 3 (Summer 1970): 98-105. This is a special number devoted to Latin American fiction.

18. Augusto Roa Bastos, "The Living Tomb," in Doors and Mirrors, pp. 132-145.

19. Juan Carlos Onetti, "A Dream Come True," in The Borzoi Anthology, pp. 566-576, and in Doors and Mirrors, pp. 190-203.

20. Juan Carlos Onetti, "Welcome, Bob," in Contemporary Latin American Short Stories, pp. 354-364.

21. Carlos Fuentes, "The Doll Queen," in Contemporary Latin American Short Stories, pp.259-279, and in TriQuarterly, pp. 394-409. In reading this story as a mystery tale it is noteworthy that Fuentes also employs detective phraseology: ". . . the mystery, Amilamia, the assessment, the clues. . . . I put my notebook in the pocket of my jacket. I cast out of my mind all the clues I had for my detective story: the comic book, the lipstick tube, the nibbled fruit, the bicycle tracks, the blue-checked apron. . . . I decided to leave this house without a word." Here the speaker is cataloging "clues" that would return him to a child who symbolizes for him innocence, exuberance, and openness. Fuentes employs the detective manner to parody it and the whole idea of being able to solve something that was missed when the opportunity first presented it but that is now lost forever.

22. Juan Rulfo, "No Dogs Bark," in The Burning Plain, trans. George D. Schade (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973).

Poetry

The challenge of creating a New World poetry has been one shared by poets of both Latin and Anglo America.[1] In recent times many poets of both cultures have come to seek sources for an authentically American poetry in many of the same places. Charles Olson's interest in Mayan art and language (see his "Mayan Letters") may be paralleled with both Asturias's return to the legends of Guatemala and Ernesto Cardenal's homage to the Mayans in his Homenaje a los indios americanos, all three seeking in the Maya civilization what Olson would refer to as "the rudiments of the first meanings."[2] Earlier, of course, Walt Whitman had sought in America and in the American language the soul of a full new expression, and Neruda of Chile echoed this by cataloging Latin American place names and everyday images or activities--from onions, oranges, and shards to underwear and mining--in an effort to discover in the familiar and near the spirit for a vital New World poetry. In Chile another poet, Nicanor Parra, has rediscovered the language of the street, finding, as Emerson suggested, in the "stinging rhetoric of a rattling oath in the mouths of truckmen and teamsters" something "vascular and alive . . . a shower of bullets."[3] Just as we saw in the case of a study of Latin American essays and short stories, so here too a useful starting point is to observe in Latin American poetry a need to discover an authentic New World theme and technique, in terms of both its medium and its message, its artistry and its ideas.

Within such a broad concept of the American poem as a search for its own unique self there figure prominently political, social, cultural, and esthetic considerations. And although it may be true that the greatest achievements have come from three or four countries (namely Chile, Peru, Mexico, and Brazil, with their modern masters in Neruda, Vallejo, Paz, and Mario de Andrade), it is equally true that almost every Latin American country has produced an original poet worthy of consideration in his own right and in terms of this theme of prospecting for a uniquely American poem.[4] Certainly an entire course could be devoted to the poetry of either Chile or Mexico, but for purposes of introducing representative works into any poetry or literature course, it is possible to find in the poetry of El Salvador's Roque Dalton, of Colombia's Alvaro Mutis, of Honduras's Oscar Acosta, themes and

techniques that run the political, social, and esthetic gamut of Latin American literature and reveal simultaneously the special metaphor, image-making, and focus of those countries unblessed with size or grand poetic traditions but favored nonetheless with gifted and visionary poets.[5] As with any work of art, the ultimate test of its validity as a teaching tool does not depend entirely on its relation to an established literary tradition but rather on its communication of deep-seated human needs, which include hopes, fears, regrets, memories good and bad, and discoveries full of wonder and revelation. And these same qualities are to be found in countless Latin American poems available in anthologies, collections, magazines, and chapbooks. The fact that most poems are short makes it possible to reproduce them easily and fit them into a class discussion without the students' having seen them beforehand. Thus, the advantages of teaching poems are innumerable, offering as they do the basic strategies of novels, a greater concentration than even the short story can manage, and national origins that include every region of Latin America.

Although Latin American poets have sought to create or recover their own peculiar voice, they have certainly been aware of international trends in the art. The influence of the French Parnassians and Symbolists, the Dadaists, the Surrealists, and the English and American Imagists is an important consideration in discussing any Latin American poet, and this influence can be traced in the work of the major as well as of the minor poet. (In almost every discussion of influence, a regular reference is made to T. S. Eliot, both by a well-known figure like Parra or a lesser-known one like Ecuador's Jorge Enrique Adoum. See for instance Mario Benedetti's interview with Adoum in Los poetas comunicantes, pp. 65-96.) A figure like Pablo Neruda, of course, summarizes for us the international movements, with his own output spanning historically the eras of modernism, surrealism, minority consciousness, and deep image or leaping poetry (so labelled by Robert Bly),[6] as well as encompassing the political, social, and cultural sympathies (especially with the Indian and the exploited) common to both contemporary Latin American and Third World literatures.[7] Ultimately, perhaps the closest ties were those Neruda felt with Whitman, and this is due principally to the already-mentioned urge to create a truly American poetry.

Aside from direct references to Whitman in Residence on Earth, Neruda's poetry offers parallels to Whitman's with respect to themes and techniques that are basic to the philosophies of both these American giants. In his "This Compost," Whitman explores the theme of earth, so close to Neruda, in the same paradoxical manner typical of the Chilean in his "Entrance to Wood," one of the "Three Material Songs" from Residence on Earth.[8] Both writers accept death, which is the substance of earth and subsequently of life. Whitman reasons his way to acceptance, which is an older approach but probably in the end a more convincing one, whereas Neruda, basically an anti-rationalist, a purely Theodore Roethke-type rooter with the worms,

enters the wood with his fingers and speaks as if his very flesh has turned to fiber. Both poets can allude to the sexual nature of the experience as inherently a part of any relationship between man and earth--"This transparent green-wash of the sea of grass which is so amorous after me" (Whitman); "Pores, veins, circles of sweetness" (Neruda)--but the overriding concern in both poems is to accept what Neruda calls "opposition" and Whitman refers to as "such sweet things out of such corruptions." Whereas Whitman remains terrified to think that Earth "distills such exquisite winds out of such infused fetor," Neruda asks wood "to root me to your death." Without having to find these poets equals in either profundity or manner, it is possible to see their common concern for an understanding of life or a simple acceptance of the relationship between life and death, of a desire to place themselves in contact with the essential nature of existence. Dramatically Whitman's poem involves the reader on a more discursive level, whereas Neruda attempts to immerse himself in the sensual world of nature as a means of vision ("let us make fire, silence, and sound, / burn, be silent, and bells"); by comparing them, it is possible ultimately to experience both poems more fully and to see not only the attraction Neruda felt for Whitman but also how they fundamentally differ in both form and content.[9]

Other major Chilean and United States poets it is valuable to compare include William Carlos Williams, Vicente Huidobro, and Nicanor Parra (all three considered, in differing ways, "anti-poets"), as well as Enrique Lihn and John Ashbery (poets of another generation that has charged a prosaic and technological vocabulary with the heightened power of visionary poetry). Without necessarily pairing Peru's César Vallejo with any one modern poet, a study of his view of man as divorced from a center of meaning in life can be paralleled to the Existentialist acceptance of this same state of things as a starting point for the task of making one's own meaning through choice and responsibility.[10] Octavio Paz's almost mystical poems can be related not only to the ancient Aztec world but to Zen and its vision of the non-rational, non-egoistic immersion in things.[11] A contrast between Neruda's sensual and Paz's more abstract contemplation of the physical world would produce a clearer understanding of these two poets' similar but essentially distinct trajectories, defining at the same time the possible influences on each of Incan and Aztec systems of thought, respectively, in Neruda's "Heights of Macchu Picchu" and in Paz's "Sunstone."

In seeking to take advantage of the work of a lesser-known figure like José Emilio Pacheco, who is overshadowed by his countryman Paz, it is important to find ways of introducing a single poem into a context more limited than those already suggested, where a historical survey is almost required before the fuller implications of a comparative study can be recognized. On a less ambitious scale, then, it is possible to present major aspects of Latin American literary thought, at the same

time giving the younger writers a chance to show what they can do, those who fully deserve it and who can often open up young readers more immediately to discussion and interest in literature than can their rather imposing superiors. This may well be the case with Pacheco, especially when paired with the little-known United States poet Reed Whittemore, whose poem "The Tarantula"[12] can be compared effectively with the Mexican's "An Investigation of the Bat."[13]

The poet's trick of making something beautiful, entertaining, and enlightening (literature) out of an ugly, disgusting, and insignificant animal can more than anything cause the reader to rethink his world as potentially charged with poetry anywhere he turns. This lesson transcends schools, traditions, and political parties and is surely one of the most important a course in literature can hope to teach. The humor of Whittemore's lecture, matched by the wit of Pacheco's dissertation, will prompt an immediate response from almost any reader. Pacheco's poem pokes fun at the game of literary criticism, which will win most students over from the first: "Bats have no idea of their literary prestige." Whittemore, speaking through the tarantula, involves literature at a humorous but existential level:

> So I am ugly. Does that mean that you
> Should persecute me as you do? Read William Blake.
> Read William Wordsworth.
> Read Williams in general, I'd say. There was a book
> By a William Tarantula once, a work of some consequence
> In my world on the subject of beauty . . .

Both poets manage to touch significantly on basic ideas of love and misunderstanding while at the same time treating the subject of bats and tarantulas in a highly imaginative and comical manner. Both attempt to reinterpret what has been too easily rejected, another sure attraction for most students, who can readily identify with the outcast. Both poems illustrate the usefulness of an indirect approach to the nature of man through a relating of the creature's or poet's sensitive and probing questions to those fundamental to mankind. The indirection achieves in this regard both surprise and subtlety:

> Man confines it [the bat] to evil and detests it because
> he shares
> the viscuous ugliness, the egoism, the human
> vampirism;
> it recalls our origins in caves . . . (Pacheco)
>
> You carry
> This image about of me that is at once libelous
> And discouraging, all because you, who should know better,
> Find me ugly. (Whittemore)

Finally, the style of both poems is conversational and quite expository in a way that makes it simpler for students to follow the argument. Furthermore, in the poems' appearance of being "true"--less fictive--through references to dictionary definitions and explanations of allusions to their nature, the effect is to involve the reader at a humorous yet highly readable level, always making points clearly and meaningfully.

By finding parallels such as these, it is possible to suggest how close one literary approach may be to another, regardless of culture or subject matter. On the other hand, in order to present the peculiar qualities of one culture's literary tradition, it is useful to contrast ours with that of a different heritage. This is especially crucial in dealing with the political poetry of Latin America, where the demand for such is so great that even the best poets suffer from catering to the call for commitment, though some have managed to create within this form a new kind of poem, far removed from anything known in the United States. Although it is valuable to compare Latin American and Chicano practices in this regard, it is more revealing to contrast the Latin and Anglo approach to the theme of injustice or cultural prejudice. Generally speaking, when we see the Latin American poet attacking imperialism from the outside we find it too much like propaganda and prefer instead the subtlety of such a poem as David Hilton's often anthologized "In Praise of BIC Pens," which tends to criticize our urge to conquer all of Asia--to eliminate the <u>other</u>--but, by means of a humorous yet hard-hitting metaphor, to capture our imaginations and win us over and cure our neuroses through strongly alliterative and yet colloquially-oriented lines:

> The common pen skips, leaves the page blank--
>
> But you, BIC pen, at nineteen cents, could
> trace truce terms on tank treads[14]

Nevertheless, Latin American poets like Enrique Lihn can also employ a combination of poetic and prosaic techniques to achieve a blend of metaphoric imagery and revolutionary fervor.[15] When this is the case we come to feel that a poet like Roque Dalton <u>can</u> handle the essential elements of poetry and voice a political passion, which seems deep-seated in the thinking of most leading Latin American writers, while still convincing us perhaps of the quality of the commitment but certainly of the artistry. In Dalton's "On Headaches," the clever analogy between aspirin and communism aids in analyzing the nature of that political system, in characterizing such vague concepts as capitalism and revolution, and finally in illustrating the differences among the three. Roque Dalton's imagery and metaphors and his allusion to paradise all focus on the single concept of pain and explore its relation to the communist state in a way that tends to lend to stale propaganda a fresh lease on life, at least so far as its literary impact is concerned:

> It is beautiful to be a communist,
> even though it may cause terrific headaches.
>
> And that's because a communist headache
> has historical weight, which is to say
> it isn't relieved by analgesic tablets
> but only by bringing Paradise on earth.
> That's the thing.
>
> Under capitalism our head aches

and they tear it off.
In the struggle for Revolution the head is
a time bomb.

In constructing the socialist State
we plan on headaches
which doesn't make them scarcer, not at all.

Communism will be, among other things,
an aspirin the size of the sun.[16]

Dalton has other short poems in his prize-winning volume, Taberna y otros lugares, that are also worthy of consideration, and although many of these are not available in translation, it is useful for the teacher knowing Spanish to translate one for the class or to ask that students who do know the language take a stab at it (even those in first semester Spanish), as the translation process will serve as the best introduction possible to the poetic work, revealing colloquial usage more dramatically and familiarizing the student with structural devices not so apparent when the English changes, simplifies, or substitutes forms or patterns peculiar to the original. Finally, translation serves to force the reader to interpret the meaning of the entire poem in order to render significantly each and every word accurately and poetically.

Since there are many schools of poetry to choose from--the physical, the metaphysical, the dream or surrealistic, the fantastic, the antipoetic--it is important to offer at least one example of each in order both to illustrate their range and to demonstrate that many Latin American poets are capable of several types, for instance Vallejo with his sensual yet highly spiritual poems. In choosing pieces for translation by students it may be preferable to stay with less abstract, less surrealistic poems, though in order to appreciate the imaginative power of Latin American image-making it would be regrettable not to introduce them to poets like Vicente Huidobro or Carlos Germán Belli, whose surrealist-inspired poems challenge the translator's ingenuity and stretch his vocabulary into areas he rarely suspects can exist, even in his own language. Pablo Neruda's odes offer especially brilliant examples of associative imagery, in which plants or objects are compared to the universe of animate life, as in the case of the artichoke, described as a "delicate heart" in "battle dress," or the watermelon, referred to as a "firmament of freshness," a "green whale of summer," a "warehouse of profundity." In the ode to the conger eel (congrio), the recipe for a fish soup becomes a metaphor for marriage and sexual intercourse, blending religion and sex in much the same manner as John Donne. And although these odes are metaphysical, the language remains simple and earthy, the lines short and rhythmically reduced to the basic ingredients of clear and accumulative sound patterns that parallel the clarity of meaning they contain, as, again, in the "Ode to the Watermelon":

and one

would like
to bite you
sinking
into you
his face,
his hair,
his soul!

We see you
in thirst
as
mine or mountain
of splendid nourishment,
yet
you turn
between teeth and appetite
into merely
fresh light
dissolving
into a spring
that touched us
singing.[17]

For a beginning at translation it might be well to start with a poet like Nicanor Parra or Javier Heraud, whose language is essentially colloquial, full of simple words in lucid lines that flow as naturally as speech and do not converse so rhetorically as those poems written in more traditional stanza patterns. Both of these poets are also representative of two highly influential schools--the revolutionary and the anti-poetic. Heraud's language is as clear as Neruda's in the latter's odes. This can be explained in Heraud's case as intentional on the part of a poet who, like Dalton and many others, seeks to express his political position in a language of the people. In Parra's case the explanation is more literary, in that the poet is reacting against overly poetic expression that chokes meaning, divorces itself from the immediacy of conversational language, and seeks to dress itself in a false, pseudo-sophisticated, and outmoded manner. Examples of both poets' work are widely available in many bilingual editions.[18]

In addition to the numerous stylistic and theoretical schools, there are also the separably identifiable groups, such as the Indians--Aztec, Maya, or Quechua poets in translation--or the women poets, who, though they often fit into the same schools as male poets, offer a special vision in terms of their point of view.[19] Not wishing to suggest that the writing is essentially different so far as basic poetic techniques are concerned, I do believe it remains true that the woman poet's work presents a position the man may either overlook, steer clear of out of masculine prejudice, or simply be incapable of, given his make-up. Three women poets who represent in their work some of these "special" positions are Isabel Fraire, Alicia Galaz, and Cecilia Vicuña. Although Fraire can be as abstract and metaphysical as her mentor Octavio Paz, her love poems are disarmingly sensual, as perhaps only a woman's can be when she gives herself wholly to the man, without the reservations so characteristic of

the male who needs to remain in total control:

> I am unable to move
> unless surrounded by your gaze
> your memory clothes me
>
> the air that held your words
> echoes in my ears
> like an uproar of angels
>
> my sleep-walking fingers
> stumble on you
> in every object[20]

Alicia Galaz takes a position perhaps closer to that of women's liberation, complaining of the woman's being relegated to a servant's role:

> According to classification born a woman.
> Eternal wife to pots, plates, sox,
> brooms, kitchens, baby food and flour sifters.
> ...
>
> High level plans condition my every move.
> Over giving or not giving birth they
> do all the talking.
> ...
>
> And you there smiling, I'll rub you out of Paradise.[21]

Like Chekhov's Dimitry Dimitrich in "Lady With a Pet Dog," man may make all the plans, but he cannot do without the "inferior race" for two days at a time. Cecilia Vicuña also voices this truth but in a more ironic, playful manner, as is characteristic of her refreshing, ingenuous poems:

> it is for sure that there are a thousand more
> beautiful waists,
> but certain things are absolutely incomparable.
> the sea-horses would have no latitude so warm
> for swimming
> the waves would be unable to navigate between my
> extremes
> and would feel so lonely.
> many flowers that have grown only
> that i may lace them to my waist,
> would prefer to wither away than
> have any other fate.[22]

In considering the teaching of Latin American poetry it is finally to the point to think of the same prominent categories into which the study of poetry is normally divided: period, form (sonnet, ode, elegy, epic), or theme (love, loss of innocence, initiation, wonder, and so on). Whether approached by region,[23] school, sex, politics, or any of the other groupings, Latin American poetry offers examples of high-quality work comparable to the best written in any such category and can serve as a basis, first, for an understanding of the nature of every type of poetry being created today and, second, for an insight into the physical and spiritual worlds of Latin America, from its flora and fauna to its political aspirations and existential

solitude.[24] Any theme or technique being taught can be illustrated effectively by means of Latin American poetry, at the same time that the characteristic culture of a region or the special impact of past, present, or foreign influence can be discovered by comparing Cuban, Mexican, Chilean, or any other latino poetry with that of England, France, Japan, or the United States. The vast availability of translations makes it virtually a trouble-free task to locate the right example for any assignment on the poem. The benefits of using Latin American poetry are assured by its quality, range, and unique cultural values. No course can fail to be enrichened by the presence of a representative Latin American poet.

Notes

1. Gordon Brotherston, Latin American Poetry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). This is the most comprehensive study of the subject and surveys very lucidly the origins of Latin American poetry, the search for a native expression, and the contemporary movements rooted in such origins and expressions.

2. Charles Olson, Selected Writings, ed. Robert Creeley (New York: New Directions, 1966), p. 105; Ernesto Cardenal, Homage to the American Indian, trans. Monique and Carlos Altschul (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). See also Cardenal's Apocalypse, ed. Donald Walsh and Robert Pring-Mill (New York: New Directions, 1977), with especially his famous "Prayer for Marilyn Monroe," which treats of the loneliness of the actress and her attempt to telephone God. Cardenal's "Hora O" is excerpted in a special Latin American issue of the Chicago Review (vol. 27, no. 2, 1975).

3. Nicanor Parra, Poems and Antipoems, ed. Miller Williams (New York: New Directions, 1966); Emergency Poems, trans. Miller Williams (New York: New Directions, 1972).

4. Mario de Andrade, Hallucinated City, trans. Jack E. Tomlins (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968); also in An Anthology of Twentieth Century Brazilian Poetry, ed. Elizabeth Bishop and Emanuel Brasil (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1972) and in The Borzoi Anthology (see note 1 to the "Short Story").

5. Roque Dalton, poems in TriQuarterly, Doors and Mirrors (see note 1 to the "Short Story"), Nimrod 18, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 1973);

Alvaro Mutis, poems in Doors and Mirrors and Micromegas 6, no. 2 (Dept. of Comparative Literature, University of Massachusetts);

Oscar Acosta, poems in Mundus Artium 8, no. 1 (1975).

6. Robert Bly, "Spanish Leaping," The Seventies 1 (Spring 1972): 16-21.

7. A fine collection for studying Latin American literature in a Third World context is Giant Talk, ed. Rainer Schulte and Quincy Troupe (New York: Random House, 1975).

8. Pablo Neruda, Residence on Earth, trans. Donald Walsh (New York: New Directions, 1973).

9. Pablo Neruda, "Entrance to Wood," Hyperion 5 (May 1976).

10. César Vallejo, Selected Poems, trans. Ed Dorn and Gordon Brotherston (Baltimore: Penguin, 1976).

11. Octavio Paz, Early Poems 1935-1955, trans. Muriel Rukeyser et al. (New York: New Directions, 1973); Configurations, trans. Paul Blackburn et al. (New York: New Directions, 1971).

12. Reed Whittemore, "The Tarantula," in Contemporary American Poets, ed. Mark Strand (New York: New American Library, 1969), pp. 361-362.

13. José Emilio Pacheco, "An Investigation of the Bat," in TriQuarterly, pp. 490-91 (see note 1 to the "Short Story").

14. David Hilton, "In Praise of BIC Pens," in Quickly Aging Here, ed. Geof Hewitt (New York: Doubleday, 1969), pp. 112-13.

15. Enrique Lihn, If Poetry Is To Be Written Right, trans. Dave Oliphant (Texas City: Texas Portfolio, 1977).

16. Roque Dalton, "Sobre dolores de cabeza," in Taberna y otros lugares (Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1969), pp. 115-16. Available with other revolutionary poems in American Revolutionary Poetry, ed. Robert Márquez (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).

17. Pablo Neruda, poems collected in Selected Poems, ed. Nathaniel Tarn (New York: Dell, 1970) and in Five Decades: Poems 1925-1970, trans. Ben Belitt (New York: Grove, 1974). Both of these are bilingual editions.

18. Javier Heraud, poems in Doors and Mirrors, TriQuarterly, and The Borzoi Anthology (see note 1 to the "Short Story"); for Nicanor Parra, see note 3 above.

19. Many collections of Indian poetry are available. For an interesting sample of Quechua, Amazon, and Pampa pieces see W. S. Merwin, Selected Translations (New York: Atheneum, 1969). Another, more comprehensive collection is First Fire: Central and South American Indian Poetry, ed. Hugh Fox (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1978).

20. Isabel Fraire, "I do not desire you," in Nimrod, p. 58 (see note 5 above). Also consult Isabel Fraire, Selected Poems, trans. Thomas Hoeksema (Mundus Artium, 1975).

21. Alicia Galaz, "Femmemasochism," in Hyperion 5 (May 1976).

22. Cecilia Vicuña, "Obscenities of a Sunflower," in Road Apple Review, special Chilean number edited by Dave Oliphant, vol. 4, no. 1 (Spring 1972); also in El corno emplumado 25 (January 1968): 75-76.

23. There are many collections focusing on either a single country or a restricted area within Latin America. For example, Mundus Artium has presented not only a general Latin American poetry issue (vol. 3, no. 1, 1969) but one number devoted exclusively to Venezuelan poetry (vol. 6, no. 2, 1973) and another dedicated to Central American poets (vol. 8, no. 1, 1975). Beyond the Rivers, edited by Charles Carlisle, features Paraguayan poetry (Berkeley: Thorp Springs Press, 1977). Books concentrating on Peruvian, Cuban, Argentine, Mexican, and Puerto Rican poetry are also available, as is the Chilean anthology cited in note 22 above. The anthologies cited in note 1 to the "Short Story" also feature sections on Argentine, Brazilian, Mexican, Peruvian, and Chilean poets. An entire course could focus on several regions or on a single nation and would still have ample range and profundity within even these narrow limits.

24. In the special Latin American poetry issue of Micromegas (vol. 6, no. 2), the editor characterizes much of Latin American literature and particularly the poetry of this collection as expressive of solitude. García Márquez's novel One Hundred Years of Solitude comes to mind once again.

In studying the influence of William Faulkner on Latin American literature this same theme of solitude can be traced through most of the Mississippi author's novels and short stories, as in Light in August with Joe Christmas or in Absalom, Absalom with Sutpen: "The solitude, the shadow of that father with whom not only the town but the [children's] mother's family as well had merely assumed armistice rather than accepting and assimilating." In Absalom, Absalom there is also the theme of civilization and barbarism, as seen in the contrast drawn between Bon and Henry. Since the novel's character relationships are highly complex (as they are in Vargas Llosa's The Green House--both novels sharing an interest in time and in what Faulkner's narrator calls starting over again with "at least some regard for cause and effect even if none for logical sequence and continuity"), the ironies at work may not be apparent from a single excerpt, yet the following description of Bon will suggest Faulkner's fascination with the question of opposing attitudes and heritages (even within the same family group): "[Bon's] reserved and inflexible pessimism stripped long generations ago of all the rubbish and claptrap of people (yes, Sutpen and Henry and the Coldfields too) who have not quite yet emerged from barbarism, who two thousand years hence will still be throwing off the yoke of Latin culture and intelligence of which they were never in any great permanent danger to begin with."

Absalom, Absalom is particularly suitable for comparative study not only because it concerns the themes of solitude and of civilization and barbarism but because it also presents a thumbnail sketch of West Indian life (specifically of Haiti) and the relationship between exploitative plantation owners and slaves in revolt. This latter aspect of Faulkner's novel may be considered in conjunction with many works from the West Indies, especially those by Lennox Brown of Trinidad and Aimé Césaire of Haiti. See annotated list of representative works and author-title index.

Novel

Although the novel is almost universally the most popular genre (despite or perhaps because of its length) and although it is truly the most all-encompassing in terms of historical, cultural, philosophical, and ideological perspectives, the time required to cover such a work does tend to make its use prohibitive if the course is devoted more specifically to a non-literary subject. Yet it is a proven fact that history courses depend heavily on fictive accounts of a period for authenticity of customs and for the basis of national character. Likewise, sociology will find in the novel reflections of true intergroup relations and mores, illustrated through "imaginary" societies such as those created in Vargas Llosa's The Green House, including as it does groupings of the Indian, the soldier-police, the nun-priest, the compassionate-physician, the whore-pimp-dike, and the thief-smuggler-slum dweller, all seen as often interchangeable in terms of morality and of the question of civilized vs. barbaric.[1] For political science the novel serves to indicate the actual motives behind a revolutionary movement by means of monologues and dialogues in the mouths of fictive figures representing either historical personages or a composite characterization formed of various viewpoints from the era. Even if there is a limit to the number of novels that can be included or even when no more than a chapter or section of a novel can be worked into the curriculum, the benefits of teaching Latin American culture through the novel are so great that no matter how minimal the use, the value of such a literary approach cannot be exaggerated nor statistically measured, for only the novel returns to life the conceptual forms we abstract in classifying and ordering experience, often killing all human value and import in the process, which again the novel can restore to flesh, blood, and spirit.

Although length is a problem, there are several anthologies of Latin American literature that provide brief excerpts from such seminal novels as Miguel Angel Asturias's El Señor Presidente, Mario Vargas Llosa's The Green House, Ernesto Sábato's Sobre héroes y tumbas, José Lezama Lima's Paradiso, Guillermo Cabrera Infante's Three Trapped Tigers, and Manuel Puig's The Buenos Aires Affair.[2] In the event, however, that it is possible or appropriate to deal with an entire novel or several novels, a number of now-familiar approaches offer themselves, including the

thematic (dictatorship, solitude, civilization), the regional (Argentina, Mexico, Cuba), and the technical (traditional, experimental, parodic). Of the novel excerpts just mentioned, each in its way can represent instances of these various categories: Asturias, political; Sábato, regional; Vargas Llosa and Lezama Lima, experimental; and Manuel Puig, parodic. All present evidence of the most characteristic Latin American theme, solitude, and most touch not surprisingly on the question of civilization and barbarism. By categorizing Latin American novels in this way it is hoped, first, that the teacher will see the relatedness of groups of novels for purposes of teaching several together, and second, that he or she may find that a novel that lends itself well to one thematic approach may serve more effectively within a course concerned with that or a related topic, especially when only an excerpt is permitted, since, this being the case, it is important to suggest how even part of a novel can represent very prominent issues and techniques.

Since the Latin American novel in the twentieth century continues many of the traditional preoccupations with the past and with a desire to recover or discover the essential qualities of New World life and philosophy, this genre is a composite of the techniques and themes characteristic of both the early and late practices of the Latin American novelist. Combining an interest in landscape with surrealistic dream sequences, the topographical and social with psychological character studies, novelists such as Juan Rulfo in Pedro Páramo, García Márquez in One Hundred Years of Solitude, and Vargas Llosa in The Green House present an updating of the regionalistic writing prior to 1940 by applying to it a Joycean and Faulknerian stream-of-consciousness methodology, even extending this device beyond the more realistic uses made by the earlier masters to a fantasy realm that is at once surreal and strangely revealing of the effects of juxtaposition of cultures, concepts, and times so at odds and so fragmented as they are in Latin America. (Martínez Estrada, for instance, points out that the "New World" is a misnomer, since what the Spaniards found was an "Old World" essentially in decay, the cultures having already enjoyed their golden ages.) To gain a true picture of the make-up of Latin American life it is necessary to view simultaneously many opposing worlds, among them the Indian and the European, the solitary and the conglomerate, the authoritarian and the communal. And though some novels have achieved a type of universal technique (notably Cortázar with his anti-novels), all tend to remain rooted in a single region and to represent the peculiar psychology of that special place. For example, Cortázar's Hopscotch reflects the sense of frustration and entrapment so characteristic of novels set in Buenos Aires, at the same time that through this theme the novel shares an affinity with works set in large cities around the world. Rulfo's Pedro Páramo treats of a cacique or dictator type who lives during the Mexican Revolution, yet through its presentation of dream sequences and its concern with the dictator mentality, with a sense of isolation and deep discontent, the novel suggests its relationship with other such

works in Latin America, especially Asturias's El Señor Presidente, Roa Bastos's Yo el supremo, García Márquez's Autumn of the Patriarch, Alejo Carpentier's Reasons of State, and Carlos Fuentes's The Death of Artemio Cruz.

Just as these novelists are aware of conflicts (city-country, ruler-peasant) common throughout the Spanish American world and write on these themes in response to or under the inspiration of fellow authors, so too have they created in their works a keen awareness of the impact of time and space on the Latin American mind. The meshing of past and present in Vargas Llosa's The Green House or García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude represents not only an adherence to modern literary technique but also the reality of a world oppressed by past injustice and turmoil that continue to plague the present both as memory and as contemporary practice. The geographical realities that have remained as barriers to self-determination in most Latin American nations continue as symbols in most novels of the human deserts, jungles, and mountains that isolate, separate, and discourage men in their daily lives. Similarly, the misunderstanding and distrust between Indian and European persists in the social structure of modern Latin American republics and serves as an analogy for the perennial argument over barbarism vs. civilization, intellect vs. passion, reason vs. instinct, innocence vs. technology. The range of the Latin American novel is thus one that includes time and space in both the topographical and socio-psychological senses, with the one often resulting from or reflecting the other.

So far-reaching in implications and artistry are Latin American novels that any one may in itself serve as an example of almost every aspect of both Latin American life and contemporary literary practice. For this reason it is possible to include a single work by one of ten significant novelists and present in capsule form the central thematic preoccupations of the genre and the characteristically inventive approaches of the novelistic art. Certainly there are those novels more concerned to study in depth a given theme, such as Lezama Lima's Paradiso or José Donoso's The Obscene Bird of Night, which treat of a type of decadent bourgeoisie and only incidentally deal with other conflicts or issues. Nonetheless, even in choosing Cortázar's experimental 62: A Model Kit, a novel set entirely in Europe, it is still possible to witness the conflicts between primitive and civilized (through the colloquial Argentine dialogues), between city and country, between art and life, between master and servant, between innocent and sinister. Perhaps, however, the most representative novels remain Asturias's El Señor Presidente, Juan Rulfo's Pedro Páramo, García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude, Vargas Llosa's The Green House, and Cortázar's Hopscotch, for these are works that not only manipulate modern literary techniques but present basic Latin American themes that haunt almost every literary genre from the Hispanic American world.

As the finest early Latin American novelistic study of dictatorship, written

in the modernist or cubist style, El Señor Presidente is the prototype of this vital and viable fictional form, having continued to inspire similar works from every part of Latin America.[3] Itself inspired by Valle-Inclan's Tirano Banderas, Asturias's novel is created from the perspective of a Latin American and represents his vision based on a single country (Guatemala) and on the realities of that nation's experience. Experimental as literature and historical as a record of a Latin American republic enslaved and tormented by a typical dictatorship, El Señor Presidente offers the student an example of fictional technique reflecting the tragic realities of terror, injustice, and torture inflicted by an insensitive tyranny and the Judases it creates. The analogy of a Dantesque hell is developed by the author by means of sound, sight, allegorical names, mythical allusions (especially to the Mayan god of fire, Tohil), scenes in satanic prison cells, and all the grotesque horror of inhuman cruelty, both physical and psychological.[4] Presented without authorial comment and through subtle musical, cubistic, and nightmare methods, the realities of a dictatorship are integrated artistically "to entertain and teach" in the most meaningful sense of that traditional phrase. In addition, as is the case with almost every Latin American novel concerned with social realities, El Señor Presidente is also the story of a love affair, this one between an almost Romeo and Juliet-like couple, the favorite of the President and the daughter of that dictator's archenemy. The lovers are destroyed by the dictator, but their love, as touching and perhaps as destined as the Italians' before them, offsets the hatred and inhumanity of tyranny. Taught in conjunction with Pedro Páramo and The Power and the Glory by Graham Greene (and even with D. H. Lawrence's The Plumed Serpent and Malcom Lowry's Under the Volcano), Asturias's novel is an artistic and historical supplement to our understanding of Mexican-Guatemalan realities, dramatizing the tragic effects of dictatorship, persecution, harsh environment, and inhumanity, as well as reflecting the role of religion both as hypocrisy and as a continuing hope in a world controlled by the Lucifers of "constitutional" power.

Juan Rulfo's Pedro Páramo has been credited with subjectifying much of what had been essentially objective in earlier works concerned with the Mexican Revolution and the Latin American landscape.[5] By employing dream techniques, breaking up normal chronology, and submerging the reader in the mythical world of a small wasteland community, Rulfo is able to reveal the true hopes, fears, passions, hates, and solitudes of not only Mexico but of modern man and especially of the Latin American. A short novel, Pedro Páramo is ideal for introducing, again, both themes and techniques characteristic of the modern Latin American novel. Much has been written on Rulfo's only novel, in both English and Spanish, and this too makes it a practical choice from the viewpoint of teacher preparation and of student outside reading-research assignments.[6] Above all, the language is essentially simple, repetitive, yet charged with emotion, with historical and psychological implications (the son's

Freudian search for his father and the man's desire for a totally satisfying sexual relationship--comparable in some ways to Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby), and with literary allusion, notably to a type of Dantean hell, comparable to yet less diabolic than that of El Señor Presidente.

In García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude there is at once the more traditional "story" and the highly inventive linguistic art object, an attempt almost at pure fiction.[7] While on one level there is clearly the sheer fantasy of imaginative language, on another there is the documentary report on political corruption, injustice, and the absurdity of life in Colombia. Humorous and tragic by turns, the novel is endlessly entertaining, at the same time that it reveals the tedium, the senselessness, the insensitivity of a society incapable of accepting responsibility for its own destiny. In this latter sense the novel reminds one of Rodó and his call for self-determination. So too García Márquez summons the Latin American to awake from his dreams, from the disease of forgetfulness, and from the sickness of accepting unquestioningly the myths of a corrupt and still corrupting past. Both technically and thematically the novel demonstrates the necessity to recreate and to recover, to destroy and to invent, in order that both the reality and the dream may serve as stimulants to a deeper, more vital existence. Although this message is conveyed in terms of a Colombian setting, it transmits meaningfully to all Latin American republics, and ultimately to the world. Taught in combination with Paz's The Labyrinth of Solitude and Martínez Estrada's X-Ray of the Pampa ("Each day of navigation the caravels retraced one hundred years. . . . The primitive world of solitude is ancient . . ."),[8] García Márquez's novel unfolds in fictional form the solitary nature of Latin American man and the necessity for his breaking down barriers of past and present before he may join with his fellows in establishing a true world of intercommunication and interaction.

Vargas Llosa, like García Márquez and almost every Latin American novelist of their generation, has sought in The Green House to present a total picture of Latin American life, from the perspective of past and present, of jungle and desert, of religion and government, of city and country, of dream and reality.[9] Within each of these sets of opposites there lies an infinite variety of themes and approaches for any study of Latin American culture. For example, the conflict between civilization and barbarism is handled ironically throughout the novel; the author generally identifies country or jungle life and the slum section--Mangancheria--with a basic source of greater human sympathy, yet he suggests that even in these romantic strongholds barbarism can overcome what Rodó called "superior ways of thinking and feeling." To present such an all-embracing view of the Peruvian world--and ultimately of man's place in a chaotic existence where his least significant acts can affect him and others with tragic and critical results--Vargas Llosa employs masterfully the literary technique of simultaneity of thought and action. As an exercise in the manipulation

of plot, The Green House achieves artistic unity at the same time that it creates a total world, timeless and interconnected in its mythical, historical, and oneiric dimensions. Telling five different but ironically interrelated plots simultaneously, Vargas Llosa weaves a tale of many lives brought together by disparate and distant acts that nonetheless cause each other and effect a series of tragic consequences as well as instances of what can finally be seen as states of expanded consciousness and heightened experience. A mystifying technique, this simultaneity is handled by Vargas Llosa with the same dexterity as does Faulkner in his masterpiece, Light in August, and with that author's same visionary, humane intelligence. Technically, the novel impresses by its logical movement within a highly chaotic narrative where at times awareness of three different times, three distinct stories, and three contrasting emotional responses is expected of the reader simultaneously within the same paragraph or sentence. This counterpointing is achieved by means of both memory and dialogue, with three sets of conversations turning upon a single image or event. (Much can be done with a musical analogy in analyzing the structure of both the Asturias and Vargas Llosa novels. Also, the Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier, as a musicologist, has integrated contrapuntally into the narrative of "The Chosen" a lecture on the life of Beethoven, has also made structural use of the music of Duke Ellington, and in The Lost Steps tells the story of a "downhearted musicologist."[10] Likewise, Cabrera Infante's Three Trapped Tigers treats of music groups in Cuba, Julio Cortázar's "The Pursued" is based on the life of the jazz great Charlie Parker, and Horacio in Hopscotch discusses jazz as an art at many crucial moments in that novel. For those interested in relating music, especially jazz, Eudora Welty's "Powerhouse" [based on the life of Fats Waller] and James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues" afford excellent materials for comparative study.) Despite the complexity and mystery of Vargas Llosa's novel, the outcome is almost crystal clear, and this aids in making its universal implications all the more apparent in terms of man's relation to environment, to society, and to himself. The central symbol of green is traditional in its pointing to a belief in origins as significant and indicates once again a central concern in Latin American fiction, no matter how experimental the technique: to interpret the present in light of the past and to regain a sense of belonging.

Whereas other novelists mentioned to this point have exhibited technical experimentation at the same time that they have explored social and historical questions, Julio Cortázar may be seen as concerned more exclusively with literary craft and its problems than with presenting or coping with social and historical reality. Certainly Vargas Llosa's artistry is similar to Cortázar's in its manipulation of plot lines (the latter's 62: A Model Kit, as does his Hopscotch, juggles several plot lines in an equally mysterious and challenging manner),[11] yet the Peruvian's interest is more with human acts and their implications than with the psychological chaos of a Cortázar hero almost incapable of action. Questions of sanity, the meaning of percep-

tion, the meaning of meaning, and the absurdity of existence--even of art itself--are more central to Cortázar's work than an analysis of historical events that have their effects outside the individual mind. Just as Cortázar invents a game to be played by the reader and simultaneously plays with the reader's perceptions (true particularly of the opening sequence in 62: A Model Kit), the novel itself serves, in the case of Hopscotch, as a comment on life as a game that can be played in an infinite number of ways ("assembled" any which way or handled, as in 62, as absurdly as the motor in oatmeal) but will yet fail to reveal its meaning or to take us to "heaven" (the metaphor borrowed by Cortázar from the game of hopscotch). This is not to say that Cortázar's work does not involve social and historical overtones, but it does suggest that the basic design is one related to an analysis of the meaning of art as much as or more than it is to an understanding of sociological behavior. As an anti-novelist, Cortázar demonstrates the ability of Latin American authors (like Nicanor Parra, the anti-poet) to participate in the world of international letters at the level of more purely literary experimentation and self-criticism. The relation between life and literature is most certainly a concern of such art, but it is more in terms of the meaning of literary experience as an equivalent to meaningful existence, as a questioning of the validity of artistic perception as a mode for understanding ourselves, our world, and our frustrations in the face of absurdity. In this sense Cortázar shares a similar vision of art with other sur-fictionists such as John Barth, whose "Title," for instance, employs all the terminology of literary criticism or the nomenclature of literary devices to tell "the story of our life." Seen in terms of a universal movement, Cortázar's Hopscotch will serve once more to illustrate the sophistication and contemporaneity of Latin American fiction at its best.

In every case surveyed here, it should be clear that the Latin American novelist can hold his own with the finest prose fictionists of the twentieth century, even as he furnishes us with insights into the nature of Latin American social and historical issues. Technically and thematically these novelists provide superb examples of twentieth-century art, with its vital vision of man's chaotic, tortured, loving, and dreaming self. Rich in plot, setting, suspense, metaphor, symbol, and characterization, their novels will serve to demonstrate at every level the novelistic art, supplying in addition an understanding of Latin American social and intellectual history more expansive and more penetrating than that of any other written form.

Notes

1. Mario Vargas Llosa, The Green House, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Avon, 1973).

2. Miguel Angel Asturias, first chapter of El Señor Presidente in The Borzoi Anthology; Mario Vargas Llosa, chapter one of The Green House in TriQuarterly; Ernesto Sábato, part III from Sobre héroes y tumbas in TriQuarterly and The Borzoi Anthology; José Lezama Lima, section from Paradiso in Doors and Mirrors and The Borzoi Anthology; Guillermo Cabrera Infante, selections from several chapters of Three Trapped Tigers in The Borzoi Anthology; and Manuel Puig, an interview scene from The Buenos Aires Affair in The Borzoi Anthology. See note 1 to the "Short Story" for further bibliographical information.

3. Miguel Angel Asturias, El Señor Presidente, trans. Frances Partridge (New York: Atheneum, 1975). In a special issue of Saturday Review on Latin America (for Oct. 14, '78) Robert Maurer speaks of a number of these dictator novels. See pages 46-49 of "The Latin American Pen Makes Its Mark."

4. See Seymour Menton, "La novela experimental y la república comprensiva de Hispanoamérica: Estudio analítico y comparativo de Nostromo, La Dictateur, Tirano Banderas y El Señor Presidente," in La novela hispanoamericana, ed. Juan Loveluck (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1969), pp. 252-298. Reprinted from Humanitas (Nuevo León, Mexico), año 1, no. 1 (1960).

5. Juan Rulfo, Pedro Páramo, trans. Lysander Kemp (New York: Grove Press, 1959).

6. See Jean Franco's comparative study of Rulfo's Pedro Páramo and LeRoi Jones's The System of Dante's Hell in La narrativa de Juan Rulfo, ed. Joseph Sommers (Mexico: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1974).

7. Gabriel García Márquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Avon, 1971).

8. Octavio Paz, The Labyrinth of Solitude, trans. Lysander Kemp (New York: Grove Press, 1961); Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, X-Ray of the Pampa, trans. Alain Swietlicki (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), pp. 84 & 139.

9. See a special issue devoted to Vargas Llosa, Texas Studies in Language and Literature 19, no. 4 (Winter 1977), especially Michael Moody's "A Small Whirlpool: Narrative Structure in The Green House," Robert Brody's "Mario Vargas Llosa and the Totalization Impulse," and Joseph A. Feustle's "Mario Vargas Llosa: A Labyrinth of Solitude."

10. Alejo Carpentier, "The Chosen," in War of Time, trans. Frances Partridge (New York: Knopf, 1970). See also the special focus on Carpentier in Review 18 (Fall 1976).

11. Julio Cortázar, Hopscotch, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Avon, 1974); 62: A Model Kit, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: 1973).

Drama

It is perhaps indicative of the minor position occupied by Latin American drama that not a single anthology cited previously in this guide contains the work of Latin American playwrights. Nonetheless, for those interested in including the drama in a survey of Latin American literature, not only are there a number of works worthy of inclusion but there are many that can be approached from the same viewpoints already discussed in relation to the other genres (especially with regard to the themes of civilization and barbarism, a return to the past, and the confrontation of low and high as treated in the section on short prose fiction). Indeed, the play provides some of the clearest and most dramatic examples of central Latin American themes suggested elsewhere in this guide, even presenting new viewpoints and further dimensions with respect to those same crucial issues. Beyond their treatment of peculiarly Latin American themes, plays also demonstrate a highly sophisticated understanding of the thought and technique of contemporary drama as practiced by Pirandello, Beckett, and Anouilh. Thus, both as an introduction to or further illustration of themes central to Latin American literature and as proof of the Latin American playwright's ability to stage works in keeping with the traditions of contemporary theater, the play is yet another genre that, although not so highly regarded as representative of the achievement of Latin American literature, can in fact serve significantly in any study of literary art from Latin America.

Certain countries, most notably Mexico, Chile, Colombia, and Puerto Rico, have produced lively theater movements. A number of volumes by individual playwrights from various countries is listed and annotated in Latin American Literature in English Translation.[1] Such playwrights as René Marqués, Jorge Díaz, and Egon Wolff have often been anthologized and are available in The Modern Stage In Latin America and Selected Latin American One-Act Plays.[2] In making use of shorter plays for the sake of courses limited in time, it is especially convenient to choose such plays as Marqués's "The Fanlights" and Díaz's "Love Yourselves Above All Others" as examples both of modern theater technique and of the central Latin American theme of civilization and barbarism.[3] Gustavo Andrade Rivera's "Remington 22" is another instance of both these aspects of Latin American drama with its absurd opposition of Reds and Blues presented

in part by means of puppets.[4] Román Chalbaud's "The Forceps," on the other hand, is a significant example of the influence of Beckett and demonstrates the Venezuelan's deft handling of props and double entendre.[5] Interesting technically is Emilio Carballido's blend of realism and fantasy in the Mexican's "I Too Speak of the Rose."[6] The variety and range of Latin American plays is remarkable and may serve as illustration of any number of thematic and technical developments.

The category of civilization and barbarism, mentioned previously in regard to all the other genres, can be especially useful in the study of the play. It is possible, for example, to link plays as different stylistically as René Marqués's "The Fanlights" (dating from 1958) and Jorge Díaz's "Love Yourselves Above All Others" (from 1971) by means of this same preoccupation with a conflict between high and low or between opposing social and cultural traditions. By discussing two technically distinct plays in terms of this similar theme, it is clear once again how significant the civilization-barbarism theme is, even to playwrights working out of entirely different theater traditions. Furthermore, by contrasting these theatrical traditions the reader discovers the range of Latin American plays and their ability to deal with central issues in either more conventional or more avant-garde frameworks, whether with the use of lighting, sets, and special effects or with the barest of props and stage machinery. Regardless of the situation or arrangement, however, a preoccupation with the theme of civilization and barbarism surfaces in both of these plays by a Puerto Rican and a Chilean author, as it does in so many other instances of Latin American essays, prose fiction, poetry, and drama.

René Marqués's "The Fanlights" presents not only the civilization-barbarism theme but also a motif characteristic of Latin American as well as of literature the world over: the longing for a paradise lost. Immediately reminiscent of Chekhov's "Three Sisters" with their yearning for life in Moscow, Marqués's three sisters in "The Fanlights" look back to a time before the Spanish American War when they lived in an aristocratic German atmosphere transplanted to Puerto Rico. What makes the play more than an attack on Yankee imperialism is the characters' realization that rather than the American fleet that shelled San Juan and marked the end of their whole way of life, a greater enemy is time itself, though in the end their real foe remains their own pettiness toward one another. Although the Americans are consistently referred to as the barbarians, time is seen equally as a barbarous opponent: "How can you face Time and not die of horror?" Emilia asks Inés (Woodyard, p. 11). In the paradise of their youth time was, of course, no real threat, for, as Emilia says, time "didn't hurt us and Strasbourg didn't belong to France" (p. 12). Their isolation in a house they no longer legally own is the result of a loss of paradise, much as in the case of Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," and Marqués's play has much in common with that almost morbid treatment of this theme of living in the past, as the Puerto Rican's presentation of a fear of time may also remind one of Faulkner. The defense against time is madness, an escape often found in both Faulkner and in the

work of his followers, especially of García Márquez. René Marqués's play is rich in parallels to the Chekhov tradition as well as to that of modern North and South American prose fiction. "The Fanlights" is close in theme and treatment, for example, to Tennessee Williams's "The Glass Menagerie" and "A Streetcar Named Desire," juxtaposing, as do Williams's plays, a desire for safety in fantasy, sanctuary against "the ugliness within us," which in "The Fanlights" is the reality of a jealousy felt by Emilia and Inés toward their more beautiful sister, Hortensia. And like Williams's plays, Marqués's work is presented through a dramatic use of lighting, costumery, and music.

In attempting to protect themselves from the erosion of time and the destructive world of commerce, the sisters turn to an isolation in madness and memory. Nonetheless, the harsh realities often break through in such a central line as this: "We always call the ones who change the world we love barbarians" (p. 22). An awareness of the basically self-deceptive nature of their withdrawal from reality makes the play all the more poignant, at the same time that the heroic quality of the sisters' hold-out against commercial change represents another fundamental theme in Latin American literature. In fact, the house they will not surrender and the family jewels they have not sold, even when on the verge of starvation, symbolize the cultural heritage Latin Americans would defend against what Rodó saw as the encroachment of Anglo enterprise.

Unfortunately, the dream world these sisters have withdrawn into leads ultimately to a kind of enslavement to the present and its technological advances. This is, of course, what both García Márquez and Octavio Paz seem to suggest in their call for an awakening to the realities of the modern world. Otherwise, they seem to be saying, those who live on dreams of the past's faded glory will "die" through an eternal dependency on those who manipulate the commodities. In spite of this fact, René Marqués presents the sisters' defense of their house as a "purifying instrument of [their] sin" (p. 35). The idea seems to be that it is more important for a people to work out their own salvation in their own way and in their own place, regardless of technological advance and the threat it poses to independence in terms of such technology. Even if this means self-destruction (the sisters burning the house down and remaining inside as the curtain closes), it is in a sense necessary in order to purge oneself of sin and to escape the profanation of one's world by barbaric elements. It is certainly suggested that the central sin is internal, but the external forces that would destroy civilization are cheated of their easy victory--the play ending with Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" as a type of symbol for the European heritage, which the sisters oppose to the barbarism of North American commerce.

Jorge Díaz's "Love Yourselves Above All Others" is a one-act play that involves two pairs of characters, each set representing the opposing social orders of high and low. The bourgeois characters exploit the two wretches upon whom they ride

as if they were horses or were being mounted sexually like animals (the staging of this scene is also reminiscent of the dictator-servant relationship discussed in the prose fiction section). In the same way, but intellectually, they (the "civilized" characters) treat their underlings as "barbarians," either making them that way by turning one against the other or keeping them down by not allowing them culturally to stand on their own two feet in order to develop their natural human abilities. Although the play is a farce and perhaps exaggerated for effect, historically it is accurate when we recall how in both North and South America aboriginal tribes were enlisted to fight against one another, dying when tricks of the sort practiced on the character Epifanio (turning his fellow underling against him) were used on the Indians, resulting in the annihilation of whole tribes, as the struggle in Díaz's play ends with Epifanio's death. References to lower-class barbarism are not even veiled here, as the upper-class characters constantly harp on this idea, and yet the underlings' grunting like primitives is caused by the muzzles they are forced to wear. Fun is even made of these sounds by suggesting that the problem stems from their being bilingual. The ultimate farce comes in the following "dialogue":

> Gentleman: They're so violent.
> Lady: They're so uncivilized.
> Gentleman: They're so stupid.
> Lady: They're so barbarous.
> Gentleman: They're so primitive.
> Lady: They're so fanatic.
> Gentleman: They can't dialogue.

In the end the barbarians are given signs with "Yes" and "No" printed on them. The underlings oppose one another for no real reason other than that the masters disagree, a disagreement their servants repeat and carry on until Epifanio is finally killed by being beaten over the head with one of the signs. The absurdity of this kind of opposition is also presented in Andrade Rivera's "Remington 22," in which "Red" and "Blue" is as meaningless an antagonism as "Yes" and "No."

Although Díaz and Marqués's plays are developed out of distinct traditions--one a farce the other an impressionistic but traditional tragedy--both works are concerned to present the theme of civilization and barbarism, yet neither over-simplifies the forces involved and neither is so naive as to blame merely an external factor. Ultimately both writers reveal the central issue to be more a failing within the characters themselves than a threat from without. In Díaz's case it is especially clear that the upper-class Chileans are exploiting the lower class, so that the real barbarians are the bourgeoisie within the nation itself. Equally in Marqués's play the revelation that we label barbarian whatever brings change is an indication that our inability to face the realities of time is our greatest enemy, not whatever is merely an instrument of changing times.

These and other plays demonstrate at least one characteristic theme in Latin American literature, even as they illustrate differing theatrical techniques. More

interesting technically, perhaps, is the work of Román Chalbaud, whose "The Forceps" is very close to Beckett in theme and technique. Chalbaud makes effective use of props, as well as of double entendre, in referring to man's misunderstanding of his own nature--of his tendency to betray himself and others, his inability to control his impulses--which allows desperation to carry him away. The absurdity of man's behaviour is symbolized here by forceps--in themselves normally a symbol of birth but ironically a means in this play of death, the result actually of a lack of communication between brothers. The play revolves around an idea of role-playing and involves many dramatic shifts when characters change roles in a desperate attempt to justify their insensitive acts. For a fine example of the Beckett tradition, "The Forceps" will serve as evidence that Latin American playwrights can adapt an important contemporary mode to their own peculiar needs. In Chalbaud's play there is less of the characteristic Latin American themes of Díaz and Marqués's plays (though the theme of brotherly love can have significant bearing on Latin American relations within the hemisphere); rather, the universal conflict of Cain and Abel is presented by means of the most up-to-date theatrical technique. Thus the Latin American play can serve to illustrate both hemispheric and international trends of thought and literary practice.

Whether it is to offer students representative themes and techniques of contemporary world literature or to demonstrate characteristic Latin American motifs, the play is another genre that can provide ample evidence of the sophistication of Latin American writing. Almost every country has produced a playwright worth including in any survey of Latin American literature. Like her poets, her essayists, and her prose fictionists, Latin America's playwrights can hold their own with the important creators of contemporary drama and deserve an opportunity to show their wares to students being introduced to the literary products of the modern age. And, when taught in conjunction with the other genres, the play can add to the student's understanding of the fundamental issues outlined and categorized throughout this guide to the teaching of Latin American literature.

Notes

1. Bradley A. Shaw, Latin American Literature in English Translation (New York: New York University Press, 1976).
2. George Woodyard, ed., The Modern Stage in Latin America: Six Plays (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971); Francesca Colecchia and Julio Matas, editors, Selected Latin American One-Act Plays (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973). Egon Wolff's Paper Flowers was published by the University of Missouri Press in 1971. A possible comparison and contrast could be made between the Wolff play, with its references to monkeys in the zoo as a symbol for the poor or for lovers separated by social levels, and Eugene O'Neill's "The Hairy Ape," which can be meaningfully read as well in terms of the civilization-barbarism theme. Another possibility for a comparative study is Edward Albee's "The Zoo Story," where two total strangers are also brought into a disturbingly intimate relationship.
3. "The Fanlights" by René Marqués appears on pages 5-41 in the Woodyard and the Jorge Díaz "Love Yourselves Above All Others" on pages 179-204 in the Colecchia-Matas collection.
4. Gustavo Andrade Rivera, "Remington 22," in Selected Latin American One-Act Plays, pp. 69-92.
5. Román Chalbaud, "The Forceps," in Selected Latin American One-Act Plays, pp. 141-162.
6. Emilio Carballido, "I too Speak of the Rose," in The Modern Stage in Latin America, pp. 289-331; see also Emilio Carballido, The Golden Thread and Other Plays, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970), and Voices of Change in the Spanish American Theater, ed. and trans. William I. Oliver (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), the latter an anthology of six Latin American playwrights, including Carballido.

ANNOTATED LIST BY COUNTRY OF REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Argentina

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote." In Labyrinths, ed. Donald Yates and James Irby. New York: New Directions, 1962.
Cortázar, Julio. "House Taken Over." In Blow-Up and Other Stories, trans. Paul Blackburn. New York: Collier, 1971.

As a short story that can be related to all Latin American literature and to world contemporary fiction, "Pierre Menard" will serve to introduce the influence of Cervantes in Latin American writing, to exemplify the essayistic short story as a contemporary mode, and to characterize Borges's method of simultaneous satire of and acclaim for a modern figure who seems both absurd and heroic in his efforts to know himself and the meaningful moments of literary history.[1] Cervantes's good Hidalgo has of course influenced writers in every part of the world but especially in Spanish-speaking Latin America (García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude is particularly indebted to Cervantes). In Borges's story the late-nineteenth-century author Pierre Menard attempts the same type of impossibility/absurdity as Quixote when the latter fought with windmills and when the former seeks to write Don Quixote by being himself and yet conceiving that seventeenth-century novel as if it had never been created. Pierre is as imaginary a creation as Quixote, which is true of many so-called authors Borges mentions alongside real ones, as in the case of Dorothy L. Sayers, of Sir Peter Wimsey fame, who is referred to by Borges as having written a prologue to "The Approach to Al-Mu'tasim," a fictitious novel that also serves as the title for Borges's short story. Typical of Borges and of other fictionists like John Barth and Vladimir Nabokov is the satirical-heroic nature of the author-subject. Absurd in his attempt to create new fiction, which of course is not at all new, the author-subject (Pierre Menard in this case) represents in contemporary fiction the quixotic-heroic trials of those who would tilt as living men with imaginary worlds symbolized most fully for them by the very literature they are writing. Even as they attempt to destroy previous literature (poking fun at those who, like Pierre Menard or B. in John Barth's stories, create works notable only for their punctuation or tales that exist only in their own minds; rejecting past literature

as no longer applicable to the present even as they repeat that archetypal pattern) these same contemporary authors recreate those former works, thereby demonstrating their immortality and providing themselves with a "new" form of fiction.

Another feature of this story is its satirizing of the entire range of scholarly obsessions with what most students will see as pointless research. What it can do for them in terms of their own research assignments is demonstrate that only by knowing the nature of scholarly pursuits can they come to appreciate the satire, recognizing the differences between pedantry and significant study (though not always easily evaluated by non-scholars), and to learn the procedure for bibliography even through the fun Borges is having with it.

In this same collection can also be found, as the title suggests, Borges's favorite symbol: the labyrinth. Other consistent themes like the relativity of time and the many as reflected in the one are available in such outstanding pieces as "The Secret Miracle" and "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." In the case of the latter it would be revealing to compare Borges's quasi-utopian tale with Machado de Assis's utopian satire "The Bonzo's Secret," to be discussed in a subsequent entry. Labyrinths is indeed an outstanding collection of Borges short stories, essays, and parables (another parallel being with Kafka and his parables) containing many representative and very teachable selections, including "The Argentine Writer and Tradition," "The Wall and the Book," and "Death and the Compass" (all cited in the introductory sections on the essay and short story), as well as the highly seminal story, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote."

Cortázar's "House Taken Over" (available also in the fine Third World anthology, Giant Talk, edited by Quincy Troupe and Rainer Schulte, from Random House, 1975) is another instance of the Latin American attraction for the mysterious or fantastic, which, as discussed in the introduction, derives in large part from Poe. An obsession with remaining in the same house, a passive rejection of marriage that would lead to having to leave the house (another characteristic of Poe is that brothers and sisters tend toward an incestuous relationship that eventually destroys both), and a fear of change or of any confrontation with the outside world--all of this contributes to a withdrawal into oneself and a closing-off from reality. Like Adam and Eve being evicted from paradise, the couple in "House Taken Over" may be better off having to face the external world. Whatever the interpretation to be placed on this mysterious and enigmatic tale, it will be valuable as a source for comparison and contrast with such a work as García Márquez's "No One Writes to the Colonel," in which the protagonist does not resign himself to a totally passive state, or with René Marqués's play, "The Fanlights," in which the defense of home seems heroic and ultimately a tragic triumph, or even with Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher," in which the struggle is, as in Cortázar's story, taking place essentially in the mind.

Recalling "Letter to a Young Lady in Paris" (discussed in the introductory

section on the short story), the absurdity of life in "House Taken Over" is a characteristic of Cortázar's work and provides the reader with a representative example of the kind of ritual through which the author studies withdrawal into mental states so akin to those of Poe's obsessed characters. The relationship of such a situation--where people are being forced out of routines--to both contemporary Latin American and world circumstances is also a worthy topic for consideration and may serve to illustrate once again the far-ranging implications of Latin American fiction.

Bolivia

Shimose, Pedro. "Count Dracula on an Inspection Tour." In Latin American Revolutionary Poetry, ed. Robert Márquez. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974.

Shimose has published several volumes of poems, one the winner of the Casa de las Américas award, from which the three poems in this book are taken. Shimose's work offers simple colloquial language (presented here with facing Spanish original) as well as a clever use of the Dracula characteristics as an analogy for military dictatorships, which destroy learning, art, and freedom of speech by ransacking, seducing ("with thousand-volt eyes") and giving the "death-kiss" before returning to the castle (symbol for power and money) to sleep in "the deep kingdoms of the dark." The colloquial style as well as the use of an almost cartoon-like character are reminiscent of Beat poetry and could be compared effectively with Ginsberg's and Ferlinghetti's poems of social criticism.

Brazil

Machado de Assis. "The Bonzo's Secret." In The Devil's Church and Other Stories, trans. Jack Schmitt and Lorie Ishimatsu. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977.

In method Machado seems clearly ahead of his time ("everything in this story is to be mysterious and disjointed"--see "Evolution," p. 85), yet in his understanding of the contradictory nature of modern man in his rush toward scientific knowledge and his consequent loss of humanity he belongs perhaps to the generation of Mark Twain. As he points out in "The Devil's Church," man is forever acting in such a way

that he almost totally nullifies at every other step what he has avowed at the one before, a tendency Machado identifies as "the eternal human contradiction" (p. 35).

In "The Bonzo's Secret" the satire is even more deadly, since the thinkers presented in this tale find science "more valuable than the pleasures of life" and will sacrifice everything to an absurd "scientific" belief that "the origin of crickets" is simply traced to their having been "born of the air" (p. 4). Machado consistently attacks such ideas as the one also offered here that "only opinion is necessary--not reality, which is only a secondary consideration." As a retelling of "The Emperor's New Clothes" this story is a marvelous updating of that satirical fairy tale. It makes a fine parallel with many of Mark Twain's stories and novels in which people fool themselves by fearing to appear a fool. These are essentially very short tales of five or six pages and can serve well as illustrations of any number of technical and thematic considerations, from the self-conscious narrator who discusses his method of telling his tale as he tells it (close to Borges and Barth in this sense) to the constant satire of man's preference for slogans or specious "principles" over real liberty or valid thinking and feeling.

Chile

Lihn, Enrique. If Poetry Is To Be Written Right, trans. Dave Oliphant. Texas City: Texas Portfolio, 1977.

_____. The Dark Room and Other Poems, ed. Patricio Lerzundi. New York: New Directions, 1978.

Enrique Lihn is a Latin American poet who has long envisioned the twentieth century in psychological, moral, and antipoetic terms (following in the latter case the tradition established in Chile by the anti-poet Nicanor Parra, whose two volumes from New Directions are also worthy of considerable attention--see introductory section on poetry). A number of Lihn's poems have attempted to characterize the nature of our contemporary world, variously labeled by the Chilean poet as "Belle Epoque" (in reference more to every man's age of innocence as a boy in the modern world), "Age of Sarcasm," and "Age of Data."

"Belle Epoque," the first of these poems and representative of many of Lihn's earlier pieces from his 1963 collection The Dark Room, though coming somewhat later, presents in its recollection of childhood "innocence" a critical age that forecasts a kind of spiritual collapse, a case for the future not unlike that of the grandfather who is ignored, who lives in the past, and who misunderstands and is misunderstood. Lihn's view of the past is always a blend of remorse and of simultaneous

attraction and repulsion. Symbolic perhaps of Latin America's attitude toward its own past, Lihn's poems provide the reader with a remarkable instance of modern man standing in a state of continual confusion.

"Age of Sarcasm" thus suggests that out of such bitter confusion comes a sense of disbelief and of downright cynicism. In two lines from "Age of Sarcasm" Lihn characterizes this state of uncertainty as the inability of modern man to know whether he is being called to attack or to defend, just as Lihn is never quite comfortable in either rejecting or accepting the past: "and the same bell that sounds the alarm, / the bugle of battle would confuse us"--meaning that we cannot tell whether there is need for defense or for waging war. The result for Lihn is that nothing means anything to us, the old ways not working and the new seeming equally ineffectual.

Ultimately, as in "Age of Data," the poet finds our efforts end only in dissatisfaction and even in a feeling of impotency, where

> Instead of uniting, we separate
> Separation and information are confused
> and data is just the opposite of God.

Although Lihn's work is basically pessimistic, it is encouraging in its honesty, its passion, and its use of unpoetic language (colloquial expressions, prosaic terminology, and contemporary allusions) to call for greater commitment to moral vision and to a sense of priorities that will lead us to place a greater emphasis on true values of the past, present, and future.

Colombia

García Márquez, Gabriel. No One Writes to the Colonel, trans. Gregory Rabassa. New York: Avon, 1973.

This fine short (actually rather long) story provides a key to many of García Márquez's central themes and can be related significantly to other stories, such as "Balthazar's Marvelous Afternoon" (discussed in the introductory section on the short story), in which defeat by or surrender to the social forces, time, and tedium is also avoided by maintaining a heroic sense of integrity. Just as Balthazar's tale concludes with his almost hollow victory seeming to him the happiest day of his life, so the colonel's story ends with the word "determination," which characterizes his unflagging spirit even in the face of near starvation and chronic stomach pains. This story may also be used as an introduction to the novel One Hundred Years of Solitude, and in fact a number of critical studies consider it a capsule version of the longer work.

Among many possible approaches to the story, perhaps the most revealing would be a character study based on a contrast of the colonel and his wife, with the latter remaining essentially pessimistic, while the former continues to hope and to find the positive side to every issue. One example would be the exchange in which the wife says that illusion cannot be eaten, the colonel replying that it may not be eaten but it feeds us.

Like many other Latin American stories and novels, this tale contains a masterful confrontation between the legal order and the little man who is being emasculated by delay and indifference. The colonel's decision to change lawyers after fifteen years of waiting for his pension to come through is a dramatic moment that, in a Kafkaesque vein, reveals the inhuman nature of the legal procedure yet also leads to the colonel's ability to sympathize with those who are part of the system (the employees in charge of pensions) and who will one day agonize just as the colonel does in awaiting their retirement checks.

Despite the deadliness of the colonel's situation his sense of humor makes of him a completely admirable figure, a hero who can see in his moth-eaten umbrella (which is useless against the October rain, a symbol of the colonel's long struggle against the inclemencies of bureaucratic rigmaroles) an object through which he can count the stars. Throughout his desperation the colonel finds the bright side, as when he concludes that hogs are fattened by eating the roses, while his wife can only lament their destruction. Even at the end of the story, when there is no cause for hope, the colonel still expects to be alive when the letter arrives.

Although García Márquez, like many other Latin American authors, would seem impatient with the slowness of change, in his colonel the Colombian has created a figure who demonstrates (as do Asturias's Indians) a deeply human heroism in the midst of indifference and indignity. The artistry of the tale begins with the opening scene of a man reduced to little more for breakfast than coffee blended with rust and concludes with the thoughts of this same pathetic figure, who has yet grown in our eyes to appear a giant among men in spite of and even because of the forces he must deal with through loneliness, hunger, and pain.

Costa Rica

Special Selection of Central American Poets in Mundus Artium 8, no. 1 (1975).

This selection features various Costa Rican poets, especially two members of a group who consider themselves poets of the "transcendental." These include Laureano Albán, Julieta Dobles Yzaguirre, Ronald Bonilla, and Carlos Francisco Monge. In addition, an older poet, Mario Picado, is represented by several poems that attempt

to "emit mystical larva of burning tenderness" and to "gamble with cards of amoral laughter" (see "Initial Border," p. 71). Like Picado, many of these poets engage in the poetic practice of "tossing moon-pennies at the impossible". Another younger poet in this selection is Alfonso Chase, whose long poem, "Solar Music," is a blend of the exotic, the excruciatingly real, and "mad unstable dreams, / asking for freedom of the body, the word." Essentially the work of these poets demonstrates an urge to experience the ineffable or the "transcendental," and their language, imagery, and rhythms tend toward the unworldly yet are expressed always in strangely but vividly sensual terms. For a parallel in United States poetry it would be instructive to have students compare these Costa Rican "transcendentalists" with the Florida-based group known as "immanentists," led by Duane Locke,[2] whose work has much in common with that of the Latin American poets who are also attracted to the idea that revelation derives from recognizing spirituality in exotic combinations such as saliva and solitude or "in the rhythm of knives born without age."

Cuba

Guillén, Nicolás. Man-Making Words: Selected Poems, trans. and annotated by Robert Márquez and David Arthur McMurray. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972.

Unfortunately, the bilingual edition of Man-Making Words is not the most useful collection of Guillén's work because it focuses too exclusively on his political and racial poems, overlooking other more significant aspects of his art that make of the Cuban a fine universal poet. Nonetheless, this selection does include a good number of poems, and since Guillén's poetry is generally short and of simple diction it is easy enough to supplement this bilingual edition by translating or having students do so from any number of Spanish editions of his poems. Various anthologies include Guillén (though again too often focusing on political themes exclusively), yet his best work remains unavailable except in scattered translations. Still, the Cuban is such an important figure that his work should be known within any study of Latin American literature and especially within that of his island nation's literary history.

One of the most helpful Spanish editions of Guillén's poems is that done by Luís Iñigo Madrigal, Antología Clave (Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1971), which serves as a corrective to Man-Making Words by identifying the major areas of thought and technique within the political, social, racial, and aesthetic realms of Guillén's poetics. As Iñigo Madrigal points out, there are varying degrees to which Guillén's work may be said to belong to Black or socialist literature. Certainly the Cuban's

work can be related to the Harlem Renaissance and to all literatures concerned with Black consciousness or to those writings addressed to the struggle between oppressed and oppressor. Yet much can also be done with Guillén's use of structural devices associated with traditional stanza patterns and with repetition, onomatopoetic sounds, the incorporation of foreign and African words, and such popular modes as cradle songs and chants. In terms of a comparative study with art, Guillén's work may be related to Cubism, as in El Gran Zoo, where, Iñigo Madrigal suggests, there exists that art form's use of multiple perspectives (for example, in "Guitarra," where the instrument is seen as simply a guitar but also as a woman and as a nocturnal bird).

Guillén's themes of negritude and of a rejection of European civilization in favor of African and native American cultures can be studied well in conjunction with almost every national literature in Latin America and in the Third World. Guillén's social and popular poems combine themes of anti-imperialism and Latin unity, especially in such poems as "Mi patria es dulce por fuera" (where Cuba is seen as a beggar, belonging to Spain one day and the United States the next) and also in "Cantaliso en un bar," where the singer calls for all poor Blacks to come to him and for all Yankees to go back to New York without bothering to pay him off. Popular poems like "No sé por qué piensas tú" have been set to music and sung throughout Latin America as a way of unifying the often conflicting nations. In addition to these more topical subjects, Guillén's poetry also contains material for study simply from the point of view of sheer musicality and imagistic power. Finally, as Richard L. Jackson points out in his The Black Image in Latin American Literature (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), "Guillen is just as much the poet of the negritude of synthesis as he is, often simultaneously, the poet of the negritude of racial affirmation. It is the larger vision, however, augmented greatly by his realization of the inevitable and undeniable fact of mestizaje, by the poet's identification with the white proletariat, and by the principles of a revolution based on a social rather than a racial conscience that Guillén, in the eyes of most observers, has seemed to evolve from a perspective of race to one of class" (p. 27).

Dominican Republic

Bosch, Juan. "Two Dollars Worth of Water." In Contemporary Latin American Short Stories, ed. Pat McNees Mancini. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1974.

_____. "The Beautiful Soul of Don Damián." In The Eye of the Heart (42 great short stories by Latin American writers), ed. Barbara Howes. New

York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973.

Although Bosch's story allows for several interpretations, it seems clear that the central conflict lies between the idea of faith and the frivolous nature of reality. Close in spirit to García Márquez's "No One Writes to the Colonel," Bosch's tale also presents a heroic figure who is persecuted by an essentially indifferent and insensitive heaven whose souls respond to her, Remigia's, prayers as if it were a matter of showing off rather than of answering them through pity and understanding.

In technique Bosch's story almost reverts to the order of Greek mythology, where the gods take sides for personal reasons. On the other hand, Bosch's brand of Latin American realism (the vivid description of the drought is more impressive than that of the flood, though both are Biblical in their elemental power) may remind one of Juan Rulfo's desert scenes with their almost allegorical overtones, and the Dominican's use of such realism, along with a deus ex machina device from classical literature, creates a uniquely Latin American style of fantasy, the opposing modes combining to produce what has been labeled "magic realism." This, then, is a model story for introducing the characteristics of contemporary Latin American fiction; at the same time, it can illustrate the manner in which such fiction plays with classical techniques and traditions for purposes of contemporary effects and commentaries.

Another delightful story by Bosch (in a fine translation by Lysander Kemp) is his satire of the soul that departs from a dying body but then returns on finding the hypocrisy of those bemoaning its demise and on discovering its own ugliness (due to the corrupt life it accepted while a resident of Don Damián's "house"). Bosch's technique again allows him to present thoughts and perceptions that are quite objective or realistic in one sense yet also extremely fantastic or magical in another--the soul seeing itself in the mirror as a grotesque kind of one-eyed octopus, watching the fake shows of mourning by wife and mother-in-law, and overhearing the false reasons of priest and physician for attending to the dying man, then reentering the seeming cadaver to revive it, to the regret of some and the further machinations of others. For a comparative approach, Bosch's story can provide a revealing parallel with Tolstoy's often anthologized "The Death of Ivan Ilych."

Ecuador

Adoum, Jorge Enrique. "Medals and Promotion." from Latin American Revolutionary Poetry, ed. Robert Márquez. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974.

Carrera Andrade, Jorge. Selected Poems, trans. H. R. Hays. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972.

Adoum's selected work appears in Informe personal sobre la situación (1973), from which "Medals and Promotion" is taken. Winner of the Casa de las Américas poetry prize, Adoum is well-known as a former private secretary of Pablo Neruda. Along with Carrera Andrade, Adoum is Ecuador's leading poet. "Medals and Promotion" is a moving elegy dedicated to the life of Newton Moreno, an activist who supported the Ecuadorian Indians and died at the hands of the military. References to Moreno's myopia develop to the overwhelming line: his "spectacles that never went to his burial," his body having been beaten like a door, knocking his glasses to the ground. Allusions to Lautréamont's anti-bourgeois character, Maldoror, combine memories of Moreno and Adoum's childhood with their efforts to "keep the peasant and his hen alive." While political and aggressive, the elegy is effective at the human and imagistic levels and presents irony, tenderness, and terror in highly-controlled lines that underscore the poet's intense emotional loss.

Jorge Carrera Andrade, a poet compared with Vallejo and Neruda by virtue of his deep identification thematically and imagistically with the South American continent, speaks in his poems with the voices of the land and its timeless inhabitants: the snake, the sun, the insect. In "The Key of Fire" the poet is the all-seeing sun:

> I founded a republic of birds
> Upon the armor of the conquistadors
> Already rusted with forgetfulness, beneath
> the banana tree.
>
> . . .
>
> I look on you banana tree as a father.
> Your tall green factory, distiller of the tropics,
> Your cool pipes never weary
> Of distilling time, transmuting
> Night into bread leaves, days into bananas,
> Or ingots of sun, sweet cylinders
> Moulded from flowers and rain
> In their sheaths, gilded like a bee,
> Or a tigerskin, perfumed envelopes.

Carrera Andrade celebrates the wealth of the continent and its durability despite the would-be conquerors who, not recognizing the real riches, came to defeat

> When deaf summer in surprise attack
> Occupied the country with gold and fire
> While villages and roadways were laid waste
> By generals of dust with troops of wind.
> ["Family of Night"]

Like Whitman, Carrera Andrade is all things, the epic singer of Latin American history, the founder of cities and nations, the forest, the farmhouse, the bee.

> Beloved land! I feel you living within me
> Full of the sum of your shapes and beings.
> The murmur of your trees flows among my bones.

While all is sleeping,
I work like a bee in the hive of the spirit.
["A Dream of Farmhouses"]

The possibilities for studying Latin American history and landscape distilled through the poetry of this Ecuadorian, of comparing his work with that of Whitman and Neruda, and of analyzing his effective use of metaphor and analogy are truly limitless and worthy of inclusion in any consideration of the epic voice.

El Salvador

Dalton, Roque. "Four Poems." In Nimrod 18, no. 1 (University of Tulsa, 1973).

Roque Dalton's poems are available in several Spanish editions--notably Poemas (Editorial Universitaria de El Salvador, 1968) and Taberna y otros lugares (Casa de las Américas, 1969)--which taken together demonstrate his broad range of styles and his depth of sensibility. A number of his poems are available in translation. Three pieces from the Nimrod issue (translated ably by Hardie St. Martin) concern death, yet all are written from different points of view. "Soldier's Rest" is presented from the dead's perspective: "The dead are getting more restless every day . . . I think they're beginning to catch on / that they outnumber us more every day." "Bad News on a Scrap of Newspaper," in contrast to the wry humor of "Soldier's Rest," is more elegiac and mournfully ironic, and "Another Dead Woman" renders a romantic memory anti-poetically: "And see? You are dead now / and I'm beginning to sprout white hairs."

Dalton can be both bitter and comical, which seems to suggest a balanced vision, for essentially his bitter poems do not attack personally and his humorous pieces seek to make the difficulties he has accepted just a little easier to take. What comes through the poems sounds healthy and basically happy, even in the face of human misery, of man mistreating man. Dalton seems to know himself and therefore to forgive his fellows even while he reminds them of their faults. Such a poetry is an asset to any society and should find welcome on either side of any issue.

Guatemala

Asturias, Miguel Angel. Obras escogidas, tomo I, Madrid: Aguilar, 1955.

Asturias's prose is well known and has been discussed in both the short story

and novel sections of the introduction. His poetry also offers a valuable addition to any discussion of American Indian beliefs and customs, of native views on Latin American as well as on Greek culture, and of the role of the poet as the recoverer of the authentic in man and nature. By comparing such a poem as "The Indians of Mixco Come Down" (available in translation in the Dudley Fitts's Anthology of Contemporary Latin-American Poetry from New Directions [1947]) with Ernesto Cardenal's "Milpa," it is possible to understand Asturias's interest in Indian life and his affinity in this regard with his fellow Latin American poets. Asturias's editions of Guatemalan Indian poetry may be linked to his own original poems, as well as to his short stories based on Indian myth. Essentially Asturias's poems on Indian thought and customs capture the exotic-simple life style of these aborigines, a blend of silence and light that is magical. The simplicity of his poetic forms, with their slightly altered stanzas and subtle sound patterns, suggests the beauty and delicacy of feeling that his observations would express. Almost every poem by Asturias presents the physical sensations associated with vegetable or human conditions of life.

Romantic in both form and content, Asturias's poems, such as "Grillo-Lirio," emphasize the simplicity of nature, its role as great teacher, and its message ("the lesson of the hummingbird"), which he derives from the Indian's belief that man must be in communion with his world. "Marimba tocada por indios" is a typical blend of music and mystery, in which the natural sounds recover the origins of creation. "Amada tropical" celebrates the sensual pleasure of the tropics, while "Tecán-umán" builds an encantatory verse into a visual connection between warrior and natural world: "an armed city in your blood." Asturias's poems on Peru can be compared with Neruda's on Macchu Picchu (see the former's "El Cusco" and "Meditación frente al lago Titicaca"). A fascinating treatment of America in terms of hope and the link between dream and earthly existence is Asturias's "Meditaciones del pie descalzo," with the image of the shoeless foot a natural emblem to represent the poet's idea of a coming into contact with physical and inspirational earth.

In a discussion of Asturias in relation to the themes of conflicting cultural heritages and of the urge for change in Latin America, the Guatemalan's poems make a significant contribution through their emphasis on the Indian's belief that man survives meaningless change by not hurrying. This can be seen clearly in such a poem as "Sabiduría indígena" and will provide the student with an important key to the kind of wisdom contained in both the form and content of Asturias's poetry, and in fact in all his literary productions. And although he identifies especially with native American cultures, the poet has also written a number of poems on Greece, her myths and people, and demonstrates an important link between his work, and that of another Central American poet, Rubén Darío, and Western civilization's Mediterranean cradle.

Dépestre, René. Mineral negro, trans. Virgilio Piñera. Havana: Ediciones Revolución, 1962.

_____. A Rainbow for the Christian West, trans. Joan Dayan. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977.

Translated from the French, Mineral negro presents in Spanish the poet Aimé Césaire has called a miracle, "the poet of freshness, of sap that ascends, of proud and wretched love, of life that flowers, of the river of hope that irrigates the humus of the present and the labor of men, the poet who knows how to GOVERN life and is not content with suffering from it." Although he is clearly a poet concerned politically with oppression and the rebellion of peoples "de color," Dépestre is capable of powerful love poems based on the same elemental images common to Octavio Paz's poems (though, as Gordon Brotherston observes, Paz's poems are strangely lacking in love). In Dépestre's beautiful "The Last Swallow" he refers to the woman he has parted from as his source of food and water, as his north and south, a "freshness that gives drink to his thirsty land." In celebrating her the poet develops an extended metaphor of water, sea, and river to suggest her role in making his life a fertile one. In saying goodbye he wishes her to forget him yet to grow more beautiful and to remain "a perpetual springtime," in keeping with his central life-giving image of her.

In a related poem, "My Contribution of Spring," the poet again celebrates his woman, discovering in her body "the pearled oysters of pleasure," giving with her a concert of spasmodic rivers. For those who fear he may lose his dedication to the revolution through an overactive love-life, the poet seems to assure his audience that "From her highest peak I plunged / Into the impassioned exuberance of life," that he gains from her the hands of a man who will make the earth green again.

Having lived in exile for much of his life and having traveled widely, Dépestre includes in his poems such subjects as a Chinese musician, whose music the poet celebrates in a hyperbolic yet moving testament to a man

> Who knew how to draw from the waves of his heart
> Harmonies more beautiful
> And vaster than those of the sea.

Many striking images capture the feeling of being an exile, as in "Dawn Song for Trán Thi Ly," where Dépestre reports

> I poet of the heart polished
> Like jade
> By the waves of exile
> And Haiti is in my heart
> Like a sailboat in a bottle

With its impressive range, musicality, and feeling, the poetry in Dépestre's Mineral

negro should be better known in English, but at least for those knowing Spanish Piñera's fine translations make it available for pleasurable study in a wide variety of contexts, all easily linked to themes and techniques peculiar to Latin American literature or proper to any literature worthy of the name.

Rainbow, on the other hand, seems more propaganda than literature and as such does not represent the best thinking or writing of the Haitian, though there are many who will object to my judgment on this score. For those inclined to appreciate angry poetry, this is a voodoo liturgy, an epiphany of hatred for whites. To give him his due, however, Dépestre's power cannot be denied, for many sections of this booklength poem (containing also odes to figures like Malcolm X and Lumumba) are full of passionate outpourings of images and rhythms. One interesting comparative approach would be to read Rainbow in conjunction with James Dickey's "Slave Quarters" as a way of considering how writers look at those of another race.

Joan Dayan's one-hundred-page introduction counters many of my objections and will probably win me over with time. Dayan, for example, would explain much of the maligning of whites in this way: "Dépestre's muse affirms the paradoxical movement necessary for rebirth. Seen in terms of loss and allied with death, she is the embodiment of the necessary movement through the negative in order to gain the spirit of genuine affirmation" (p. 104). Certainly Dépestre is a poet worth trying to understand and a challenge for teacher and student alike.

Honduras

Acosta, Oscar. "3 Poems." Mundus Artium 8, no. 1 (1975).

Three poems from Acosta's 1965 collection, Poesía, have been translated by Harry Haskell for the special Mundus Artium Central American issue. Like the poems to be found in his co-edited collection, Antología de la nueva poesía hondureña (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, 1967), these are short pieces that attempt to capture a state of mind or an emotion by focusing on an object or a person and describing them by means of analogy. Exercises for the student in the areas of classification and description may be effectively illustrated through analysis of Acosta's poetry. Two of the poems in the Mundus Artium selection are similar in structure and theme, "Oblivion" and "Memories." The poet defines these mental states by means of extended metaphors, using in the case of "Oblivion" the image of a tunnel slowly opening to the heart of the universe, "to an unknown country from which we can never return." The allegorical is blended with surrealistic imagery in such phrases as "nocturnal insides" and "walls full of names, / beings,

events," as if oblivion were a place we could visit, a building, a country, or an anatomical universe, yet from none which we can ever return. In "Memories" the ironic is coupled with the mysterious when it is said that memories "show me visions I would like to forget" and "caresses [are] made by unknown hands".

Many poets employ these same techniques for exploring the unknown, the emotional, the enigmatic, so that the Honduran's work can be related, for instance, to a poem by William Butler Yeats with a title similar to Acosta's, "Memory," a poem in which the image of a hare making an impression in the mountain grass analogizes the memory left in the poet by the thought of a special woman. In each case the abstract is given concreteness through the use of analogies drawn from the physical world. Classification of special feelings is achieved through listing qualities that are either similar to or distinct from those we would understand and appreciate, through placing the description of physical properties or objects at the service of the intellectual or emotional. Many poets are adept at this methodology, and Oscar Acosta is only one of many Latin American poets who can aid in demonstrating the effectiveness of such rhetorical devices for the purpose of classification and definition of abstract concepts or emotional states.

Mexico

Paz, Octavio. Early Poems 1935-1955, trans. Muriel Rukeyser et al. New York: New Directions, 1973.

_____. Configurations. New York: New Directions, 1971. (Both are bilingual editions.)

One of Paz's most distinctive images is that of the fountain, basic to his fine long poem "Sun Stone" (in Configurations; also available in The TriQuarterly Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Literature and in Hyperion 5, no. 13 as, in the former case, "Altar of the Sun," translated by Stephen Berg, and in the latter as "Sunstone," translated by Marijane Osborn) yet also present in the earlier "The Broken Waterjar," with the reference to "one tall tree in the middle of the field like a petrified fountain." The search for a fountain of energy, inspiration, of life-giving waters is at the root of Paz's poetry and reflects his and other Latin American authors' distress over the apparent fact that the gods have died: "have all departed, broken waterjars at the edge of the clogged fount" [my translation]. In contrast, as the poem continues, only the toad survives, a reference made clear later with the line "Is only the fat chief of Cempoala immortal?" Like Ernesto Cardenal, Paz employs contemporary images in ancient contexts to suggest the corruption

of earlier values or to link the corruption of those times with present commercialism:

> in battle dress, in a carved stone mask, breathing
> the smoke of the firing squads like a
> precious incense,
> or spending long weekends in his fortified house
> at the seashore with his mistress and
> her neon jewels. [Early Poems, 139]

Paz's poems are magnificent edifices whose building blocks are slowly piled up in a theme-and-variations manner, with the central structure based on such a fundamental foundation as that of the fountain or its interchangeable, metaphorical image of the tree:

> look at the dust that rises like a yellow king
> and uproots everything and dances alone
> and falls down
> like a tree whose roots have suddenly dried up,
> like a tower collapsing at the first blow,
> look at the man who falls and rises and eats dust
> and crawls along,
> the human insect who pierces the rock and pierces
> the centuries and gnashes at the light,
> look at the broken rock, the broken man, the
> broken light. [Ibid., 141].

What Paz calls for is the emergence of meaning as symbolized by key images which can be related to many of the same terms employed by T. S. Eliot in "The Wasteland" or "The Hollow Men." Appropriately water images abound at the end of this poem, as the poet asks if the fountain will revive:

> tell me, broken waterjar in the dust, tell me,
> is the light born to rub bone against bone, man
> against man, hunger against hunger,
> till the spark, the cry, the word spurts forth
> at last,
> till the water flows and the tree with wide
> turquoise leaves arises at last? [Ibid., 143]

Many of Paz's poems are short and serve well as instances of imagistic conciseness, yet even these form part of a larger mosaic that the Mexican has constructed to represent the wisdom and artistry of his cultural heritage, which can be related to oriental philosophy or, as in "Object Lesson" or "Riprap" from Early Poems, to the haiku form. The variety of forms he employs also makes of Paz a natural choice for teaching poetic structure, whether it be the lyric, a theme and variations, the freedom of "On Reading John Cage," the philosophical-musical meditation of "Fountain," or the experimental "Blanco" from Configurations. Certainly the power and range of Paz's poetry is equal to any written in Latin America and therefore of that composed in any area of the contemporary world.

Nicaragua

Cardenal, Ernesto. Apocalypse and Other Poems, ed. Robert Pring-Mill and Donald D. Walsh. New York: New Directions, 1977.

Cardenal's career represents a development from imagist and epigrammatist traditions to the creation of more epical poems based on American Indian and New World themes. Thus his work can be studied in terms of both the Greek and Roman mode of witty epigrams and the American mode of native Indian legend and myth constructed on Pound's and Williams's imagistic pattern for contemporary epic poetry. The influence of imagism remains constant, as Cardenal unifies his longer, Indian-oriented poems around clear image clusters, as in "Recordings of the Sacred Pipe," in which the drum, ball, circle, roundness (versus the square of Western civilization) are presented for purposes of a theme-and-variations treatment of the idea of peace and communication between men. His early epigrams are also concerned with American themes (as in "Epigrams" nos. 13 and 18, which introduce historical allusions, especially to Somoza, dictator of Nicaragua), yet many of Cardenal's poems in this classical mode treat of love and politics (nos. 8 and 41), of the transitoriness of life (no. 25), and of the relationship between poet and reader, lover and loved one, with the witty turn at the end adhered to after the classical manner (notably in the satire entitled "Somoza Unveils the Statue of Somoza in Somoza Stadium"). It would be especially instructive to teach Cardenal in conjunction with Ben Jonson, Catullus, and other classical masters of the epigram.

In addition to the many opportunities Cardenal's work offers for a discussion of classical modes and motifs, of imagist theory and practice (see especially "Above the Rain-Soaked Track," which owes so much to Pound), and of the Latin American use of Indian materials (based for example on sayings of Black Elk or the history of Mayan civilization--see his entire book on this theme, Homage to the American Indian, translated by Monique and Carlos Altschul, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), Cardenal also deals with modern civilization by means of character sketches of such figures as Marilyn Monroe (in "Prayer for Marilyn Monroe") or a meditation on the meaning of love and life inspired by the death of his friend and fellow poet Thomas Merton (in "Coplas on the Death of Merton"). In "Apocalypse" Cardenal makes a visionary-allegorical statement on the contemporary world situation much in the way Allen Ginsberg does in "Wichita Vortex Sutra," with both poets utilizing contemporary allusions to point up their distress over inhumane conditions. Constant references to telephones, neon signs, and gasoline stations signal in Cardenal's works the substitution in our civilization of distance, advertising, and speed for true communication and understanding. The desire for retirement has taken the place of an urge to live, and Cardenal's poetry calls us back to a reconsideration of our lost values. To do

this the poet employs striking contrasts, as in his "Psalms," in which he makes pseudo-religious statements about law and order for purposes of demonstrating our corruption of Christian values in the name of ungodly aims or gains.

Much of Cardenal's work will throw significant light on other important American poets, among them Charles Olson,[3] Pound, and even Whitman. "Coplas on the Death of Merton" is an elegy in the grand tradition of Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (it can also be related to Milton's "Lycidas" and Shelley's "Adonais"), for both poets use the occasion to meditate on the meaning of death and to prefer in the end life, since, as Cardenal writes, "to die is not to leave the world it is to plunge into it". On so many levels and in so many areas of writing Cardenal's poetry will serve to demonstrate the power and vision, the understanding of classical tradition and of contemporary practice as evidenced by the work of poets throughout Latin America.

Panama

Young Poetry of the Americas, vol. I. Washington, D. C.: Pan American Union, 1967.

Fireflight, trans. Catherine Rodríguez-Nieto. Berkeley: Oyez, 1976.

(Both of these are bilingual editions; YPA contains very useful notes and critical commentary on each of the seven Panamanian poets represented.)

In his Poemas corporales (1955), translated in Young Poetry of the Americas, the Panamanian poet Carlos Francisco Chan-Marín speaks of the need for parts of the body to cooperate, as he says of the tongue, "for combat, for the hymn". The theme of maintaining a balance between celebration of life and protest against death (or injustice or exploitation) can be found in the work of many Latin American poets, and this Panamanian represents this view as well as any. A meaningful study would be one intended to discover how and how well such poets find a happy medium between these two opposing urges and to determine in what ways they are in conflict or how they can in fact live together within the same poem.

Another of the seven Panamanian poets in this collection is Tristán Solarte, whose long poem "Poetic Approach to Death" treats of the need to face such an ultimate reality on its own grounds, without the use of "dubious prayers," "black crepe," or "insulting flowers" to impress death. Solarte has also published a novel, entitled The Drowned Man (El ahogado), which was recommended for publication by Ernesto Sábato.

The poetry of Elsie Alvarado de Ricord, as presented in Fireflight, is both

passionate and formally controlled, which creates in the reader a heightened sense of the poet's emotional life as communicated through language intensified by means of sound, diction, and structure. Very feminine in theme and point of view, this Panamanian's poems offer a powerful testament to the spirit of a woman who is able to give herself totally to love of a man, to joy over the birth of a child, and to the awareness that, like the shadow in her "When Your Mouth Said Goodbye," our spirits are a part of us we are carrying around everywhere. In her "Passengers in Transit," a fine longer poem on this latter theme, the speaker sees the spiritual part of man or woman as never growing airsick, for it

> lands
> without wrenching its back;
> simple, standardized, it aspires only
> to fruitful work, a fruitful embrace

This particular piece is a tour-de-force and can serve both as a modern instance of the theme of man's relationship to his soul and as a fine example of clean, clear Spanish at the service of perhaps that most difficult subject of all. Also, the poem is a useful vocabulary-builder for travelers who will need to know words and phrases for baggage, customs, vaccinations, and other terms associated with airports. [The] analogy of travel is worked out well, until at the end of the poem a sense of our only being "in transit" brings to mind the fact that nothing on earth, even our loves, will be ours forever. Still, there is the suggestion that heaven may hold a possibility for more permanent existence, one to be contrasted with our commercial flights, which can only end in the certain return to a back-wrenching aterrizaje.]

Paraguay

Beyond the Rivers: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Paraguayan Poetry, ed. Charles Richard Carlisle. Berkeley: Thorp Springs, 1977.

"Nine Paraguayan Poets," in The TriQuarterly Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Literature, ed. José Donoso and William Henkin. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969.

In addition to the masterful prose of Augusto Roa Bastos, discussed in the introductory sections on both the novel and the short story, Paraguay offers an important array of poets, including Roa Bastos himself. In Beyond the Rivers Roa Bastos is represented by poems (especially "The Land" and "The Men") with a strong historical and geographical sense, characteristic of his best prose. Other poets included here are José-Luis Appleyard and the young J. A. Rauskin, who have been translated well by Bruce Cutler. The introduction to this volume is particularly

valuable in providing student and teacher alike with background information on the country and its political and poetical movements, with their interrelationships. Dates and names identify "the salient aspects of Paraguayan history since the Sixteenth Century." Footnotes also add important facts that figure thematically in the poems, facts that most readers would probably not know, as in the case of Elvio Romero's "Cane Press," where the translator's note points out that the guayacán tree used for cane presses is also known as the lignum vitae (tree of life), which the translator explains is "an important consideration in seeing the thematic development of Romero's poem."

Most of the younger poets here are included in both selections, being represented usually by the same poems. This provides a good basis for comparison of translations, and much can be learned by analyzing the differences and, in many cases, the word-for-word parallels of the renderings. Take for example John Upton's translation of three lines from Ramiro Domínguez's "Flour From Lifeless Roots" and compare them with Charles Carlisle's of the same passage:

> Take the adobe's time
> to draw mire from the depths to bake
> in the glare of siesta sun.
>
> ———
>
> Take the mud's own time
> To draw mire from the depths
> To bake in the glare of the siesta sun.

For purposes of sound and emphasis both translations offer valid word choices and placements, yet the slight differences suggest that the original may exist either somewhere in between or elsewhere. Such a close reading of the translations might call for the student to consider the original in order to discover where or why the translator might have gone astray purposely or mistakenly. By analyzing such difficulties of translation the student would not only appreciate the translator's task but could also gain greater insight into the meaning and artistry of the original.

Peru

Maurer, Maureen Ahern. "An Anthology of Peruvian Poetry." In The TriQuarterly Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Literature, ed. José Donoso and William Henkin. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969.

Peru: The New Poetry, ed. David Tipton. New York: Red Dust, 1977.

Most of the same poets are presented in both of these collections, with usually the same poems translated by Tipton and/or Maurer. The overriding impression

left by this poetry is one of reevaluation--an attempt by the inheritors of the Inca tradition to recover or to come to grips with the loss of that heritage. Not that the conquest is merely a question of ancient history but rather that it is a matter of what several of these poets characterize as the sadness of being "lettered & a clerk" (see "Loneliness II" by Antonio Cisneros). In his "History of Peru" and "Human Wisdom" Washington Delgado traces cynicism, distrust, and defeatism more to the Catholic church than to the conquistador:

> When someone talks of the spirit
> look out for your pocket.
> This is the wisdom that comes to us
> from a place called the West.
> . . .
>
> Later came the other people
> who had courage
> and weighed gold.
> They taught us.

Delgado summarizes Peruvian history as being "no past / only a multitude / of dead."

The poet-critic-novelist Julio Ortega is also affected by a sense of having been despoiled spiritually. His "End of Autumn" is a lament for a loss of reality. The poet compares himself to "an animal bewildered in the movement of autumn . . . and though / unreal this scene initiates my loneliness and flees with me to / the beginning." Time and again these poets look backwards to time when, as Delgado puts it, "the sun shone / above, below and inside."

In the case of Carlos Germán Belli the same attitude prevails, though the imaginative thrust of his poetry lends to it a certain uplifting aspect that comes through even when thematically the poem may be focusing on a depressing state of affairs. For example, in "Segregation" Belli speaks of escaping by digging "to the bottom of the earth, / deeper than ever, / far away from the bosses . . . far far away from the owners, / among the feet of small creatures." Likewise in the long sequence "O Hada Cibernética" the poet chooses to become part of nature ("a cliff-face / the face of an elm / or an owl's") rather than to remain struggling on "absurd Peruvian wages / to maintain some human dignity."

For a very penetrating discussion of Belli's blend of Golden Age diction and Vallejo-like brooding, see Gordon Brotherston's useful introduction to Belli in Latin American Poetry (Cambridge University Press, 1975). Study of Belli will provide an important opportunity for comparing and contrasting the work of Vallejo with that of the more recent poets of another generation who are indebted to but depart from the earlier master.

Puerto Rico

Cruz, Víctor Hernández. Mainland. New York: Random House, 1973.

As a territory of the United States (officially a commonwealth associated with this country), Puerto Rico by its very nature creates for its people a type of split personality. Thus in the work of Cruz, who, like many Puerto Ricans, has lived both in New York and on the island, there is a crisis of identity illustrated in such pieces as "los New Yorks" and "Notas," where the speaker is confused as to whether he is in New York or Puerto Rico:

> snow like coconut flakes
> skyscrapers like palms with lights

The cultural crisis produced by this confusion has, however, contributed as well to a rich fusion of images. And despite the split, more of the Latin flavor survives, perhaps because the poet has struggled to maintain a closer connection with the "mainland" of his cultural heritage. Nonetheless, aside from the strong Latin rhythms to be associated with Cruz's poetic line, there is a strong feeling for New York that bespeaks certain affinities the Puerto Rican must experience when in reality he is a product of both cultures. Like many Latin American intellectuals who have emigrated to the United States to enjoy greater freedom for their art and scholarship, Cruz represents an interesting comment on the relationship between Latin and Anglo cultures and how the one may indeed provide the other with meaningful grounds for growth or with workable artistic raw materials.

In this regard it can be fruitful to compare the cases of Anglo New Yorkers who have visited the Caribbean and been influenced by Latin culture. Both William Carlos Williams (whose mother was part Basque and studied in Puerto Rico and whose father spoke Spanish and had traveled by mule in Costa Rica) and Hart Crane (whose mother's plantation on the Isle of Pines in the Caribbean was the inspiration for many of his important poems) can be profitably compared with Víctor Hernández Cruz in terms of the cross-cultural influence of New York on a Latin and the Caribbean on an Anglo. Much can be made of the interest each takes in the contrasting life styles characteristic of the tropics or of a northern clime. Even Wallace Stevens's interest in the exotic nature of the tropics can be studied in relation to the work of Cruz. The attraction these Anglos felt for the rhythms of Caribbean life can also be compared and contrasted with the attitude of Cruz toward New York, each seeing the other's environment from the perspective of cultural traditions that tend to question the validity of the "other." Such poems as Williams's "Adam," Crane's "The Hurricane" and "Royal Palm," and Stevens's second section of "The Comedian as the Letter C" all offer

exceptional views of the Caribbean from the North American perspective that can be examined in the light of Cruz's similar cross-cultural experience. Consider, for example, this passage from Stevens:

> He [Crispin] perceived
> . . . in the fables he scrawled
> With his own quill, in its indigenous dew
> Of an aesthetic tough . . .
> Green barbarism turning paradigm.
> Crispin foresaw a curious promenade
> Or, nobler, sensed an elemental fate,
> And elemental potencies and pangs,
> And beautiful barenesses as yet unseen,
> Making the most of savagery of palms,
> Of moonlight on the thick, cadaverous bloom
> That yuccas breed, and of the panther's tread.

Uruguay

Benedetti, Mario. "The Iriartes." In Latin American Writing Today, trans. Jean Franco. Baltimore: Penguin, 1967.

_____. "Gloria's Saturday." In Contemporary Latin American Short Stories, ed. Pat McNees Mancini. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1974.

(Both stories are available in Spanish in Mario Benedetti, Cuentos completos, Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1972.)

A simple plot with complex overtones, Benedetti's "The Iriartes" presents a modern, urban instance of man's inability to be satisfied with what he at first takes to be a dream come true. Having his way, finding happiness in another, the speaker in the story discovers his "mistake" and ends the affair, trading present reality for an ideal that remains untested and unproved. The turn in the story comes with a single word--"ridiculous"--with its connotation of an unfavorable judgment, this one being made for no really justifiable reason. Easy to read in either Spanish or English, Benedetti's story offers the possibility of in-depth discussion of man's attraction for the ineffable. The language is essentially straightforward, the narrator's attitude open, yet in the end the story takes on psychological dimensions that are made even more dramatic against the clarity of Benedetti's prose. Also, the narrator's "openness" proves ultimately another example of self-deception and his "love" a case of social jealousy.

Another fine tale is "Gloria's Saturday," from Benedetti's 1959 collection, Montevideans, whose beginning may remind one of James Joyce's "The Counterparts" from another study of a modern urban population, Dubliners, for both present the tedium and hopelessness of office work. Just as Joyce's characters have been seen by critics

as paralyzed victims of modern life, Benedetti's may be considered equally so. References to the protagonist and his wife as being reduced to animals at the end of the working day, too tired to talk or make love, suggest the brutality of urban existence. The doctor who calls on Gloria, suddenly taken seriously ill on her day off, is referred to as a cow, and the surgeon, though kindly, is sloppily dressed and even dirty. Told through the eyes of the husband, the story ultimately comments on man's inability to make anything out of life before an inexplicable death like Gloria's snatches his future out of his dispirited hands. The environment may be largely to blame, but both Joyce and Benedetti tend to leave the reader feeling that men are too willing to make excuses for themselves, or, as in "The Iriartes," are not inclined to recognize happiness even when they have it. Benedetti's story can be compared favorably and instructively with Joyce's. Both authors introduce religious undercurrents that bear heavily on the deeper meanings of their tales.

Venezuela

Chalbaud, Ramón. Requiem para un eclipse. Caracas: Editorial Landi, 1957.

Chalbaud's "The Forceps" has been discussed in the introductory section on plays, but that work appears to be the only drama in translation by this fine Venezuelan author; therefore, I have chosen to annotate Requiem. Even though it is available only in Spanish, Chalbaud's work seems to me highly teachable and extremely deserving of a wider audience. Like most plays, the language in Requiem is simple and thus serves as a valuable teaching tool if presented in the original Spanish. Also, this particular play can be related both to Hamlet and to Oedipus Tyrannus, plays that are often anthologized in introductory literature texts (see for example Drama (The Norton Introduction to Literature), ed. Carl E. Bain, New York: 1973).

Concerned with questions of origins (is the husband father of the son?), Requiem develops a basic Latin American theme at both the level of cultural significance and that of familial relationships: 1) has the wife been faithful to the husband from first to last, in both the marital and the spiritual senses? 2) how has the husband lost touch with his early promise as a poet? The play explores distances between dream and reality, husband and wife, son and father, mother and daughter, considering psychological barriers that are compared with physical distances on the Latin American landscape. When begged by the family to return home, the father asks, "Stay in that house where from chair to chair / there is more distance than from plain to Andes?" According to Willis Knapp Jones in Behind Spanish American Footlights (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), the play also "deals with homosexuality" (p. 350).

Divided into a series of frames (cuadros), Requiem features in each a central dialogue between two of the four main characters (or five if we count the man who represents the husband's alter-ego from college days). Soliloquies are especially dramatic in their exploration of the central question of knowing: what it is to know (see pages 14, 33-34, and 80-81, where the same soliloquy is repeated with slight but significant variations) and how one can know if he is figuratively blind to reality. Both of these themes are clearly common to Hamlet in his soliloquies and to Oedipus in his blindness and in his relationship to the blind seer. (An allusion to Hamlet occurs on page 14 and a probable reference to Oedipus on page 89.)

Symbols figure effectively in the dialogues, especially the perfumed bed (referring to the wife's background as a whore), the bottle of rum (a depressing reminder to the son of his relationship to the minorities who either drink to forget or slave in the cane field in order that he may enjoy the beverage), and finally the eclipse (which refers to the husband's choice of a professional death that he may revive his lost talent for poetry). True to the Oedipus-Hamlet plot, the father-husband is killed by the wife-mother and son, if only symbolically, though the meaning of the murder and the role of the perpetrators differ significantly from those of the classic plays. Much can be done with a comparative approach to Requiem; at the same time, Chalbaud's play will stand on its own as an outstanding example of a contemporary verse drama.

As in "The Forceps," Chalbaud in the Requiem is also concerned with questions of falsehood, of disguises, of allegiances, and of the need at times for the blind to guide the unseeing. The search for honesty and authenticity relates not only to Chalbaud's theme of knowing and of origins but also to this same central concern in much of Latin American literature. In keeping with the Venezuelan's mature and sensitive vision, his play arrives, in this same regard, at an extremely penetrating conclusion: "Never believe in good or evil. / Nothing is so good. / Nothing so bad."

West Indies

Although Jamaica and the Lesser Antilles are not precisely Latin American, since Spanish is not the predominant language, it does seem appropriate to present a sampling of writers from these islands in order to suggest the similarity of theme and technique among authors who have experienced like histories and who continue to create under comparable conditions. The countries represented in this sampler include Barbados, Jamaica, Martinique, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad.

Breaklight: The Poetry of the Caribbean, ed. Andrew Salkey. New York: Doubleday, 1972.

As editor Salkey points out in his introduction, there is a need felt in the Caribbean for "a radical reclamation of the spirit," for "cultural reconstitution and political advance," needs similarly felt throughout Latin America. Excerpts from Edward Brathwaite's "Rights of Passage" express this urge to rediscover the meaning of island life. "Ogun," from Islands, is a fine portrait of the poet's woodworker uncle, the imagery of his craft developed as a means of expressing the man, his identification with the environment seeming to give to the wood its "knotted hurts" and "yellow whorls," which become an "emerging woodwork image of his anger" yet also of his discovery of "a black rigid thunder he had never heard within his hammer." Brathwaite is one of many fine writers from Barbados.

Another side to this struggle for understanding who one is in terms of one's birthplace is Louise Bennett's "Colonisation in Reverse," in which the Jamaican poet presents an ironic, humorous comment on how history is turned upside down by Jamaican migration to England, her people settling there to live on welfare. On the other hand, many West Indies writers identify strongly with England on the basis of their education and their love of the English language. Derek Walcott from Saint Lucia treats of a related theme in "Exile," in which he declares England home, for through her language "Even her wretched weather / was poetry." Like Víctor Hernández Cruz, Walcott tends to see his homeland, Saint Lucia and Trinidad, through England, or at least through her language, so that he feels a slave only to her word, which ironically he uses to express his feelings for the islands. Such writing can be related significantly to the various expressions of Latin American feeling for and against Spain and Portugal.

Walcott has often appeared in the New Yorker and is therefore available in that format for outside reading assignments or research papers. Such a project would allow students to discover how often fine, living authors from the southern hemisphere are to be found in United States periodicals, either in the original or in translation (Borges also is a frequent contributor to the New Yorker). A good example of Walcott's work is "Koenig of the River," which appears in the New Yorker for July 10, 1978 (p. 27), a full-page poem that presents the rich landscape and complex racial heritage of the West Indies at the same time that it explores the relationship between a missionary's work and the slow domination of torpor among the tropics.

Caribbean Rhythms: The Emerging English Literature of the West Indies, ed. James T. Livingston. New York: Washington Square Press, 1974.

This anthology includes a number of excellent short stories and essays and a play, all concerned with themes relatable to the Latin American experience. Perhaps

the most directly comparable work is Lennox Brown's play, "The Trinity of Four." The Trinidad playwright presents in his one-act drama a commentary on slave-master relationships that are not so simple as they are usually thought to be.[4] In this instance it is seen that the price of freedom is often paid by means of the betrayal of one's fellows, an individual failing though caused in large part by the slave system, which creates the situation wherein both slave and master resort to devious means for securing their happiness. Here the lower-class white master wishes to sell out to larger owners and does so despite an understanding with his slave that he could buy his freedom. Meanwhile the slave, in order to obtain the money, is selling out his fellows for the price of liberty. Dramatic contrasts and then links between slave and master point up an interesting variation on the civilized-barbaric theme so familiar in Latin American literature. Neither side is clearly good or evil, but rather both represent a vicious circle into which the system has locked them. As individuals they both seem crushed by circumstances but also by cowardice and a desire for "bettering" their situations. Only one character out of the four understands how things are and makes a subtle but telling rebuff:

> And after freedom. What are you going to do?
> Just live.
> Here?
> Yes.
> But you doing that now.

Another author from Trinidad, Errol Hill, has contributed an insightful essay on "The Calypso," a subject that can be studied in conjunction with popular poetry in native American and mestizo cultures. The structure of Hill's essay can also serve to demonstrate the proper development of a subject from the historical survey, to a discussion of leading figures, to a classification and consideration of types of composition (here the categories are digging songs, play songs, baptist revival songs, and insurrectionary songs), to a discussion of the uses of the calypso form (a type of tabloid to convey information), to the impact of the form (a great leveler, with all sides being satirized), to the need to maintain freedom of expression, and finally to an evaluation of the artistic and social significances and values of the form (provides moral insight and observation, promotes "understanding or improving of the human condition," and creates through timely and timeless qualities of language a unity of parts: wit, metaphor, and rhythmic structure--all in artistic harmony with the story or idea). In conclusion Hill finds that the calypso has served as "a compendium of the people's language," of their history, and of "the whole spectrum of human experience." Such an essay may well serve as both model and subject matter for a student's own writing assignment.

Three stories in particular from this anthology can be useful in understanding how West Indian authors handle themes common to Latin American writers. V. S. Naipaul of Trinidad treats, in his "The Baker's Story," of a Black's ingenuity in overcoming

racial prejudice. In fact the prejudice is really more cultural than racial, and once the would-be Black baker recognizes that only Chinese are accepted as bakers he finds a way to get around the tradition to his own benefit and to that of his prejudiced customers. As a study of how rules or time-worn attitudes can be peacefully resolved or at least neutralized, Naipaul's story may be compared or contrasted with similar handlings of such touchy situations or with dissimilar approaches that may involve violence when intelligence would have worked better.

In Andrew Salkey's "Anancy," the Jamaican presents a type of children's story of a wrestling match between a spider and a host of ghosts. The speaker's colloquial rhythms suggest the ritualistic, folk-tale quality behind the story, just as the imagery, drawn from elemental nature or man-made objects with basic symbolic meanings, indicates the allegorical significance of the final fight, which is the spider fighting with his own life in a struggle against pride. In the end the moral is that "a person is truly strong only after that person's spirit has proved him." The influence of folk-tales on Latin American writing can be traced in both novel and short story, especially in the work of Cuban authors, who have deep roots in the folk-tale tradition.

A related tale in the sense of its folk roots is George Lamming's "A Wedding in Spring." Employing his native speech idioms from Barbados, Lamming presents a study of Barbadians in England who are attempting to prove themselves equal to the cultural expectations of the British. A comical tale, this story is also a fascinating blend of revenge, colorful talk, poetic prose, and mixed emotions. While admiring Britain, the Barbadian folk demonstrate their own unique heritage, even as they fail to perform properly in terms of another culture. Pride in one's own tradition should never, Lamming seems to say, be set aside for the sake of courting another way. In a real sense the Barbadians preserve their own unique folk traditions at the same time that they attempt to adapt to another role as inhabitants of another culture. Both Martí and Rodó would, I think, applaud such an attitude, since cultural isolation, they believed, can only lead to sterilization of thought and art.

Island Voices: Stories from the West Indies, ed. Andrew Salkey. New York: Liveright, 1970.

George Lamming's "Birds of a Feather" is a story about the relationship between Americans and West Indians. This penetrating tale analyzes the lack of understanding between the two peoples, the getting to know and appreciate one another, and the lasting impact of their encounter. As an interesting study of the American character from the West Indian's viewpoint, the story touches on the attitudes of Americans toward foreigners and their way of life, on the American sense of being exempt from such ways of life simply by being American, on the American's overbearing nature

in terms of his being firm and decisive, and on the changes he brings to the places he visits or uses.

Césaire, Aimé. Discourse on Colonialism. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972.

As a poet, Césaire has been considered one of the most significant figures in New World literature. From Martinique and therefore writing in French, Césaire does not fit into either the English or Spanish traditions, yet his themes are quite definitely related to Latin American literature. To understand this most clearly it is appropriate that we consider his essay on colonialism, in which he discusses many of the themes already noted in both West Indian and Latin American writing.

In the first place Césaire points an accusing finger at what he calls Christian pedantry and blames this "chief culprit" for laying down "the dishonest equations Christianity = civilization, paganism = savagery, from which there could not but ensue abominable colonialist and racist consequences, whose victims were to be the Indians, the yellow peoples, and the Negroes." Like Guillén, however, Césaire does not advocate withdrawal but rather believes that the worst sin of colonization was that it did not allow for a meeting of differing civilizations but only an elimination of one in favor of the other. Ironically, colonization caused savagery in the colonizer, "the supreme barbarism."

Although it is always suspect in argument to draw extreme analogies (and the one with Hitler has become a cliché), it is most edifying to read Césaire's quotations from Hitler, which he then compares to quotes from the Christian bourgeois, including even Ernest Renan, who advocated the slavery of Chinese and Blacks. Césaire is right on target when he demonstrates that both Hitler and the bourgeois argued for the expropriation of the property of "uncivilized" peoples for "public purposes," just as the Nazi had rationalized his invasions in the name of a superior race. Students can learn the effective use of analogy at the same time that they will be enlightened by Césaire's fair and humane analysis of the barbaric-civilized dichotomy.

Further, Césaire proceeds to prove the boomerang effect of colonization, contrasting the values of colonization with its detriments and demonstrating in the process the negligible results when the two are balanced. Again, Césaire can provide the student with an excellent example of effective rhetorical argument.

His primary conclusion is that in comparison to Europe, with its imperial societies, the indigenous civilizations were more communal and fraternal and therefore less barbaric. In fact, Césaire believes that the colonizers caused the "pernicious aspects" of the local past to survive, so that rather than the "barbarians" being backwards it was the reactionary Europeans.

In his enthusiasm Césaire fails to provide examples for some of his vague

charges against the United States or to present evidence for the cures he attributes to the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the essay is brilliantly developed and refutes many false claims about the inferiority of indigenous peoples and offers for the student both material for study and a model for the writing of an effective rhetorical analysis of a central and burning issue so current even today in Latin America.

Notes

1. Available in R. V. Cassill, ed., The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978).
2. Duane Locke, The Immanentist Anthology; Art of the Superconscious (New York: D. Smith, 1973).
3. See particularly Paul Christensen's recent discussion, in Charles Olson--Call Him Ishmael, University of Texas Press, 1978, of Olson's views on Mayan life: "He argued that such cultures revealed a vital bond between man and nature rarely expressed in Western civilization" (p. 42). Elsewhere Christensen states that Olson "rejects the Greco-Roman heritage in favor of the Indian" (p. 97).
4. See the classic by Brazilian Gilberto Freyre, The Masters and the Slaves (1946, 1956), as well as his fine essays on such topics as "Cervantes' Example" and "The Civilization of Man Sitting." The latter essay is especially revealing in terms of the civilized-barbaric dichotomy: "The fact is that an inseparable part of these campaigns has been the European and North American attitude toward tropical peoples, civilizations, and cultures: one of almost systematic disdain for whatever is specifically native to those civilizations and cultures or different from European and North American custom, including bodily postures in work, repose, or recreation that are different from those sanctioned as 'civilized' by the civilizations of cold and temperate climates--which are, I repeat, those of man seated in the European, North American manner, in expensive, orthodox upholstered chairs made from stuffy materials. Hence the scorn as inferior, uncivilized, or even ridiculous of positions assumed by the human body for labor, rest, or recreation which differ from those sanctioned as civilized in Europe and the United States" (p. 150 of The Gilberto Freyre Reader, trans. Barbara Shelby, New York: Knopf, 1974).

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